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Hafa Adai!

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ON 25 PCT PENSION PAYMENTS ISSUE

Torres ordered to appear in court

DENNIS B. CHAN
The House minority bloc's Reps. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan) and Ramon Tebuteb (Ind-Saipan) at a Saipan and Northern Islands Legislature Delegation session on Tuesday.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» Judge: Delay or failure to pay 25 pct pension payments isn't Tang's responsibility

U.S. District Court for the NMI designated Judge Frances Tydingco-Gatewood yesterday ordered Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to appear in this Friday's hearing on the issue whether the 25 percent pension payments are currently being properly funded.

Tydingco-Gatewood likewise ordered House Speaker Ralph Demapan (R-Saipan) and Senate President Francisco Borja (Ind-Tinian) to appear at the hearing set at 8:30am.

Torres

It is not clear if Torres can make it at the hearing as he is currently in the U.S. mainland.

In her written order issued yesterday, the judge pointed out that any delay or failure to pay the 25 percent pension payments is not the responsibility of Settlement Fund Trustee.

At an emergency hearing last Friday, Tydingco-Gatewood stated that the court will not allow inciting words from Torres pertaining to pay-

See TORRES on Page 4

Past political concessions wrangle efforts to ease pension shortfall

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives majority bloc voted down a bill yesterday that would have dedicated the entire Saipan casino annual license fee to fund payments for CNMI retirees' 25 percent pension payments.

House leaders warned that passing the bill would renege on commitments made to Rota and Tinian lawmakers who were essential in getting the casino law to pass.

See PAST on Page 4

Docomo Pacific: 100-pct restoration by March

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

More than half a year after Typhoon Soudeor cut down cable network connections on Saipan, Docomo Pacific said it targets full restoration of their services by next month.

In a response to *Saipan Tribune* inquiries, Docomo sent out a press release saying it is targeting March 10 as it continues to work for a 100-percent full restoration of its services.

"Restoration progress on Saipan stands at 53 percent and 100 percent

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Fifty-five senior students earned their certificates from the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute after successfully completing the hospitality program.
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Four U.S. F-22 stealth fighters flew low over South Korea on Wednesday in a clear show of force against North Korea.
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Virgin Galactic later this month in Mojave, California, is preparing to roll out its new SpaceShipTwo.
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Local

CUC board withdraws 2015 rate application

- **Board warned CUC 'running out of money'**
- **Board will reconvene today to discuss rate recommendations further**

By FRAULEINE VILLANUEVA-DIZON
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Despite its dire need for additional revenue and warnings of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. running out of money by October, majority of its board of directors moved to withdraw their rate case application filed last April—bringing with it the possibility of not getting the money it needs to keep up operations later in the year.

Instead of making a decision on recommendations made by consultant, Economists.com, to "invest" some of the savings that they have from the low prices of fuel, the board ultimately moved to withdraw the application it submitted to the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission last year, which sets a uniformed rate of $0.069 per kilowatt hour to residential customers after about four hours of discussion.

Vice chair Eric San Nicolas made a motion to withdraw the April 2015 application after concerns were discussed by some members on the difference of the current and the proposed rate, particularly for those in the lower-usage tier of the current inverted block.

"If you remember, last year, we filed in April. I think it was February or March, the board approved the uniform rate. At that time, the board understood that these individuals that are in the lower usage tier, their rates would increase from $0.02 to $0.069 so it would go up by five cents. That $0.069 will automatically, because of the expiration of the PL 16-7 credit, move to $0.092," CUC legal counsel James Sirok said.

In their 15-02 docket last year, it stated that the board "considers the current inverted block rates to be prohibitive and discriminatory toward its high volume residential users" and noted that the "uniform rate would encourage a greater level of usage by reducing the cost for high volume residential customers."

Run out of money

Prior to the motion, Sirok reminded the board of the need to make a decision on the rate case that was presented by Economists.com.

"We need to make a decision today and not tomorrow because we are trying to get this matter on the April agenda. It's already causing time restraints because we're not going to get it filed until the first week of March. That means that the consultants for the commission are not going to have the large amount of time to review it," Sirok said.

"If we delay a decision on this, it's certainly not going to make that April proceeding and may not be put on decision until October or November in the fall," he added.

Sirok also noted the need for the revenue.

"That proceeding will go forward even without this but we would like to get this because we need the revenue from this rates. My understanding is, based on the information from the past board meetings, that our need for revenue is going to increase as we move forward to the point, that it's going to be more important to deal with it as we get into the fall months," Sirok said.

Director David Sablan, in one of his comments, boldly put that the utilities company will run out of money later in the year.

"If we don't do something with our cash flows, we will run out of money by October. We won't have anything or enough to pay the oil; we're going to have problems with personnel, so this is very critical," Sablan said.

"We have a responsibility as policymakers that we have enough," he added.

However, the same board members, with the exception of newly-elected Commonwealth Development Authority board chair Ignacio Perez, who now represents CDA at the CUC board, who approved the 15-02 Docket last year now withdrew it.

The motion was carried, after getting six yes votes from CUC board chair Adelina Roberto and directors Chris Concepcion, Joe Torres, San Nicolas, Albert Taitano, and Perez, and a lone no vote from Sablan.

'Investment of savings'

Economists.com earlier presented to the board and formally recommended that CUC submit a revised rate application to CPUC requesting a uniformed rate for residential customers of $0.129 per kilowatt hour.

The $0.129 per kwh comes from the earlier proposed uniform rate of $0.069, taking into consideration the expiry of the PL 16-7 credit which will add $0.023 to the rate, plus $0.037 should the board decide to recover from losses and fund future projects it needs.

For commercial and government accounts, the adjusted rate would be $0.15 from the current $0.11 and $0.12, respectively.

The $0.037 is broken down as follows: $0.008 per kWh for the $1.5 million needed for CUC to recover from the settlement agreement with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and increase in bad debts; $0.007 per kWh for CUC's $1.2 million debt payment to the CDA; $0.015 per kWh to pay for the $3 million share of CUC for typhoon restoration; and $0.027 per kWh to have $5,219,265 for non grant-funded capital project requirement.

CUC would need a total of $10.9 million in revenue for CUC to improve its quality of service, financial health, and pay costs CUC has incurred since last year.

Economists.com said CUC has reduced the average residential bill by 60 percent in the last two years and that despite the adjustment in rates, it would be more likely "an investment of savings" rather than rate increase as ratepayers will still pay a lesser amount than they paid two years ago.

The main reason for the reduction of utility bills is because of the fuel adjustment charge from $0.30 in April 2014 to $.093 today.

"We understand that nobody wants to be responsible for a rate increase. That is certainly human nature, however, at the same time, we see no longer alternative to being able to get $1.2 million other than to recover from the general ratepayers," Economists.com managing director and chief executive Dan Jackson said.

"Keep in mind, it's getting $0.037 of the $0.21 savings and investing it."

Asked by Roberto why there is a need to put in the rate what CUC needs to pay CDA, Jackson replied, "Quite frankly, if you're going to pay

See CUC on Page 4

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Probationer gets 5 years in prison for trying to steal generator

A habitual offender was slapped with a five-year prison term for trying to steal a generator from a house's storage room in Chalan Piao while he was still on probation.

Vincent Ronald San Nicolas Muna, 30, on Tuesday afternoon pleaded guilty to the offense of burglary and admitted to violating the terms and conditions of his probation in previous four criminal cases.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo accepted Muna's guilty plea and the plea agreement.

Govendo sentenced Muna to two years in prison for burglary and three years in jail for the probation violation or for a total of five years imprisonment.

The defendant was ordered to start serving the prison term at the Department of Corrections on Feb. 23, 2016, at 8am. His release from custody will be on Feb. 9, 2021 at 8am.

Upon completion of his prison term, Muna will be placed on probation for five years. He was required to pay a $100 fine, $100 in court costs, and $500 in probation service fee.

Govendo ordered the defendant to perform 80 hours of community work service, stay away from the victims, and complete drug and alcohol counseling, plus other conditions.

According to the factual basis of the plea agreement, Muna broke into the residence of Jose Tenorio and Yvette Tenorio in Chalan Piao with the purpose of committing theft on Sept. 3, 2015. He violated the terms of his probation in four criminal cases by failing to obey all CNMI laws by committing the offense of burglary.

Jose Tenorio told police that he and his wife had a gathering with friends at their house and that they were using the generator to light up their garage. He placed the generator inside the storage room so it won't get wet and secured.

While in the garage, they noticed the light in the garage was flicking so the couple's friend went to check the generator in the storage room.

The friend noticed that the generator was missing. As they followed the extension cord that was pulled out from the storage room, they found the generator located three feet behind Muna's car trunk.

They found Muna next to the generator. Tenorio and his friend held Muna and called the police.

Assistant attorney general Heather P. Barcinas appeared for the government at the hearing. Assistant public defender Matthew H. Meyer served as counsel for the defendant.

In July 2013, Muna pleaded guilty to criminal mischief in a 2008 case, to theft in a 2012 case, and to two counts of theft in another 2012 case. He also admitted to violating his probation in a 2011 criminal conviction.

Associate Judge David A. Wiseman accepted the plea deal and sentenced Muna to a total of six months imprisonment and placed him on probation for five years. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Promoting Chamorro culture through shirts

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

KAMMER BEACH, Tinian—Julian Hofschneider is using his years of experience as a former educator in keeping Chamorro culture alive—albeit with a twist.

Chamorro is the language and culture of the people from the Mariana Islands, the CNMI—Saipan, Tinian, Rota, and the Northern Islands—and Guam.

The former principal, with the help of his brother and other relatives, combined his love of promoting the Chamorro language and T-shirt making through Yunga Designs. Yunga, pronounced dzunga, means to draw or sketch.

"Preserving the Chamorro language and culture… a design at a time," is the slogan that Yunga Designs is promoting.

Hofschneider was among the local businessesmen that had a booth in last weekend's Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival. He also performed with his band, The Trio, with Nikita Mendiola and Arlan Agadar.

"We began with the Chamorro logic "Taya Guaha" that means no problem. After it came out, people are asking me 'when are you going to make the next one?' So it became a series," said Hofschneider.

JON PEREZ

Julian Hofschneider, right, poses with his wife Margarita Decena Hofschneider in their booth at the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival last weekend at Kammer Beach grounds in Tinian.

He was a former principal at the Tinian Elementary School for seven years before heading Tinian Junior and Senior High School for another three.

"We want to preserve the Chamorro language and culture with humor on the side. We started with a really low profile back then but people loved the designs so we came out with new ones," added Hofschneider, whose clothing line began in the 2007 San Jose Fiesta.

Their designs feature any of the islands in the Marianas chain, island warriors, Chamorro saying, anything that show the island lifestyle.

"All our shirts represent the Marianas as we also want to help the island artists who are helping us in coming up with new designs. After the Chamorro Logic series, I'm also thinking of creating another series to add diversity," he said.

"We also have the R.E.D. design or Remember Everyone Deployed, which became popular among those who are in the service or has a relative in the military and the Talayeru for the fishermen."

Hofschneider said that they could also ship orders and those interested just need to visit their Facebook page, YungaDesigns, and send them a message.

"We're still setting up our website. But shipping comes with costs. Those who wanted to place orders could deposit their payments to our banks or pay through PayPal," Hofschneider added.

Hofschneider, after retiring as principal, is now an independent contractor/teacher for the Title I program under the CNMI Public School System for four years now.

Probable cause found against 56-year-old man accused of raping 18-year-old in jungle

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho has found probable cause to warrant the filing of charges against a 56-year-old man for allegedly raping an 18-year-old student in a jungle area at the Saipan airport.

At a preliminary hearing on Tuesday afternoon, Camacho found probable cause to charge John Santos Aldan with sexual assault in the first degree, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

Camacho ordered Aldan to answer the charges.

Arraignment will be on Feb. 22 at 9am.

After the hearing, Aldan was remanded into the custody of the Department of Corrections.

A $100,000 cash bail has been set for the defendant's temporary release.

The alleged victim told police that Aldan picked her up from school last Feb. 8 then brought her to a jungle area by the ARFF Building at the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport.

The teenager said she struggled but Aldan grabbed her neck and raped her inside his red Toyota T 100 pickup truck.

She later told her mother about the incident. Her mother then called the police.

Police detective Therese S. Kintoki is the officer in charge of the case. Assistant attorney general Shannon Foley appeared for the government. Assistant public defender Matthew Meyer served as counsel for the defendant. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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PAST

From Page 1

House Bill 19-21, authored by Rep. Jonathan Blas Attao (Ind-Saipan), sought to redistribute the current split of the $15 million license fee, split now as $2 million each to Tinian and Rota, $1 million to Saipan, and the $10 million to the 25 percent pension payment.

This was an unpopular proposal among Rota and Tinian leaders, as well as the Saipan mayor who is a recipient of the $1 million split.

But Attao and the House minority bloc believes a funding shortfall in the future is guaranteed and would jeopardize—just as the current delay in the 25 percent pension payment—the livelihoods of the retirees.

Attao argued, during session yesterday, that a full $15 million to this pension payment plus e-gaming appropriations, 60 percent of which are dedicated to these pensioners, would have taken the issue off lawmakers' hands as opposed to "Band-Aid" legislation to manage the funding in the future.

Attao argued that the casino law rode on the understanding that retirees would be taken cared of. Attao, referring to other House bills passed that day to prevent another delay of 25 percent pension payment, called these "temporary."

"We shouldn't continue to react," Attao said, referring to the most recent Settlement Fund scare and similar issues over the past decades.

"We should act and move on," Attao told *Saipan Tribune*. "I want the problem removed."

Attao's bill, however, was found unpopular among municipal mayors, and effectively killed yesterday largely along party lines.

The 10 no votes came from the House majority, with nine yes votes from the minority bloc.

Rep. Antonio Sablan (Ind-Saipan), chairman of the Ways and Means Committee that has entertained the bill since March 2015, summarized comments the committee had received from the Saipan and Rota mayors who argued that the bill would "unplug the machine" of needed services.

"Many people depend on what we do," Sablan said, reading from Saipan Mayor David Apatang's letter. The mayor's office "needs fund to accomplish duties to the public," he said.

Tinian Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas has yet to respond, Sablan said.

Sablan drew concern to the "spirit of cooperation" among the three senatorial districts not seen in years past. "This one bill would go a long way to dissolve the strong coalition between the three legislative districts," Sablan said.

He argued that there were other remedies to address the 25 percent pension payments, noting that "we have yet to tap the funds" from the Saipan casino's business gross tax revenues.

"I voted for [the Saipan casino law] understanding that without the support of the first and second senatorial districts," there "would be no casino, no revenue, no 25 percent [pension funding], no $15 million" license fee. "And for that, I cannot support" the bill, Sablan said.

Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), for his part, noted he has not supported the casino over the last 10 years and his support in the 18th Legislature was "a big sacrifice" on his part but that "the biggest sacrifice" came from Tinian and Rota.

Island leaders knew that a casino on Saipan "would kill the industry on Tinian," Deleon Guerrero said. But despite that, Deleon Guerrero said, Tinian and Rota lawmakers, like now Senate President Francisco Borja (Ind-Tinian) and now acting governor Victor Hocog, came out to support and explained "why this industry" was needed.

"There would be no public law 18-56 [the Saipan casino law] without their support," Deleon Guerrero said.

A passage of the bill would be "reneging on what was" committed to, he said, "and for that reason alone," he could not go back and "change the terms" on what was agreed to.

Rep. Edwin Aldan (Ind-Tinian), for his part, said Tinian heavily relies on the "leftovers" of the casino license fee. "We've used these funds for scholarships, medical referrals" and the 25 percent pension payments for Tinian, he said.

"We do not generate revenue from our casino," he said, referring to the Tinian Dynasty casino closure last year. "We are lucky we have [the Saipan casino law] to support pensioners."

Rep. Glenn Maratita (R-Rota) also said the bill will have a "significant impact" on Rota. "We are at a very disadvantaged position" economically, he said.

The bill would "definitely have an adverse affect" the on operations of the municipal government, its employees, pending obligations, and medical referrals, Maratita added.

Deleon Guerrero also attempted to address the accusations of the government's continued "Band-Aid" or "piecemeal" solutions.

He argued, pruning the terms the minority bloc used, that "all these bandages" would support the 25 percent payments.

The so-called "permanent solution" of Attao's bill—if they "added it all up"—would be some $2 million "not heading" to retirees' payments.

"19-21 would be a net gain of $2.2 million," Deleon Guerrero said.

"All these bandages put together will more than make up the $2.2 million shortfall."

The vice speaker also attempted to hand lawmakers a "reality check."

He said that even if the bill passed the House, that "the sacrifices of Tinian and Rota" would "not be forgotten in the Senate," meaning it would not pass the Senate and not make it to the governor for signature.

"There is a lot of history behind here that cannot be tossed aside," Deleon Guerrero said.

For his part, minority leader Rep. Ramon Tebuteb (Ind-Saipan) told reporters before he left the Legislature yesterday that he could not seem to find the "spirit of cooperation" that the House majority sought to defend in the law.

"This 'spirit of cooperation' is not in the law," Tebuteb said, acknowledging that the House yesterday made political concessions over solutions.

'Constitutional obligations'

In an interview at his office, after his bill was effectively killed, Attao assured retirees he would "keep fighting."

"We will continue to fight and find ways that the retirees' issue is solved, done, that we get rid of it and that we move on to the future," Attao said.

"The future deserves a lot better than we are going to present them," he said.

Attao called the three bills passed yesterday a "Band-Aid" and largely depending on tax collections to help the pension payments.

"The only thing permanent was the $15 million" over 40 years, he said.

Attao disclosed that $15.78 million is needed to fulfill the entire 25 percent payments.

He believes retirees would "rather bite a shortage of $780,000, than a shortage of a couple of million."

That would mean a total "cut" of the 25 percent pension payment.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

TORRES

From Page 1

ments of 25 percent pension payments to retirees.

The judge read a news article quoting the governor in a statement when he urged "all retirees and settlement fund members to contact Ms. Joyce C.H. Tang and ask her to stop playing games with your pensions."

Tydingco-Gatwood said Torres' statement was "not acceptable, not appropriate, not right, and not fair."

Tang is a Guam-based lawyer that the court appointed as representative for the Settlement Fund Trustee.

At the emergency hearing, acting governor Victor Hocog appeared with counsel, assistant attorney general Teresita Sablan.

Tydingco-Gatewood yesterday also ordered the CNMI's Executive Branch to make the 75 percent pension payments a priority, as that is its obligation under the Settlement Fund agreement.

Tydingco-Gatewood said pursuant to the settlement agreement in Betty Johnson's class action, the trustee is responsible for disbursing 75 percent of the pension payments.

The remaining 25 percent, the judge pointed out, is not the trustee's responsibility.

However, Tydingco-Gatewood said, in an effort to accommodate the government, the trustee has also been disbursing the remaining 25 percent on behalf of the government.

She ordered the Executive Branch to work closely with Tang—and with the Legislature—if necessary, to address the trustee's concerns over the lack of proper appropriation for the 25 percent pension payments.

The judge encouraged the Executive Branch and Tang to work cooperatively and collaboratively, as they had done in the past.

The emergency hearing was held upon Tang's request because she and the government are not able to agree on whether the 25 percent pension payments are currently being properly funded.

Last week, Tang informed Torres in a letter that the Settlement Fund cannot continue to accommodate the government in disbursing the 25 percent pension payments unless the government identifies a source income that can be used for this purpose or obtains a court order.

Last Friday, Tang returned to the Department of Finance, the $632,052.71 that was intended to pay the 25 percent pension payment due Feb. 12, 2016.

Finance has been paying approximately $630,000 to $640,000 every 15 days or $1.2 to $1.3 million a month just for the 25 percent pension payments.

DOCOMO

From Page 1

for Tinian in terms of reconnected subscribers," Docomo Pacific manager of technical operations for CNMI Jaynard White said.

According to Docomo, they are pleased with the current restoration rate, noting that much of the challenge has been receiving materials necessary for the repairs.

To date, Docomo crews have completed cable restoration in Garapan, Oleai, Chalan Kiya, Susupie, Chalan Kanoa, Afetna, San Antonio, Koblerville, Aslito, San Vicente, Dandan, Papago, Kagman 1, Navy Hill, Gualo Rai, Finasisu, and parts of Asteo and Kagman 2.

For their next restoration work, they will work on Kagman 2, Kagman 3, Asteo, Capitol Hill/Talofofo, Puerto Rico/Lower Base, Sadog Tasi, Tanapag, San Roque, As Matuis, and Marpi.

Docomo said their engineers and field crews are in the process of restoring electronic equipment and main distribution lines that sustained severe damage during Typhoon Soudelor. Approximately 75 full-time, part-time, and temporary employees have been allocated towards these efforts.

Aside from labor costs, Docomo has already invested "several million dollars" in extensive repairs including restoring electronic equipment, repair of main distribution lines as well as long-term investments in their network infrastructure.

On a positive note, Docomo said Typhoon Soudelor provided them the opportunity to convert Saipan's video content to be fed via live stream from Guam.

It also prompted upgrades to their network infrastructure, resulting in the installation of 28 miles of underground fiber optics.

Because of the intermittent services, Docomo said their customers continue to receive credit adjustments.

Customers without service in the restored areas are urged to contact their Customer Care department at 483-CARE (2273).

CUC

From Page 2

CDA $1.2 million a year, that money has got to come from somewhere. CUC has only one revenue source, that's its ratepayers."

Sirok reminded the board that they can just get portions of the items that they want to fund.

"What is being told to you is though is the rate can no longer be the $0.69 that we have in the current petition. Based on the credit expiration, it has to be at least $0.92 but then, there are these items," Sirok said.

Since the board moved to withdraw their 2015 application and discussed infusing the items to the current inverted block rate, CUC chief financial officer Matt Yaquinto said they have to look into what the amounts would be like.

"The 0.069 will give you a different amount than the inverted block rate," Yaquinto said.

Among the items it can fund, the board later on moved to add to the rate the $0.015 for typhoon recovery with a sunset provision of one year and with the option to extend.

All board members voted yes, including San Nicolas who earlier said that he will not allow for any "increase" in residential rates.

Business accounts

San Nicolas also raised during the discussion with the consultants how the scenario would look like if only commercial customers would shoulder the adjustment in rates.

To this, Jackson said the commercial rate will go up to $0.20 and government rates would be around $0.21 to $0.22 kWh.

"That rate may drive people off the grid. It may force some businesses out of business. Because what you would be doing is you would be forcing the commercial businesses to subsidize the residential customers," Jackson said, adding that residential customers have to bear some of the costs as well.

San Nicolas asked for further presentation of this data, which Economists.com said they can provide today, as the board reconvenes for another public meeting.

Sablan, however, commented that the request would be an "exercise in futility" and that he does not agree to it.

"You don't want to charge the commercial and government accounts more, then keep the residential rates where they are. You are to create a very strong protest from our commercial accounts," Sablan said.

Sablan, who was also a former chair of the Guam Power Authority, wanted the board to move forward with the recommendation of Economists.com.

"The public will understand if we explain clearly that we are trying to protect and improve their system for the future, provide reliability of our system for more economic development," Sablan said.

Further discussions will be made by the board starting 10am today.

Torres heads to DC; names new special assistant to admin

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres has flown stateside to attend meetings with U.S. Capitol and White House officials to discuss issues affecting the CNMI and meantime has announced a new member of his Cabinet, according to statements from the Office of the Governor yesterday.

"Governor Torres will have the opportunity to discuss workforce development relative to current development needs prior to and after 2019," said press secretary Ivan Blanco yesterday, referring to the 2019 date when the local contract worker program expires.

Torres is set to attend the 2016 Senior Plenary Session of the Interagency Group on Insular Areas, or IGIA, on Feb. 22. The meeting gathers insular leaders to make recommendations to the President every year on federal program and policies affecting the islands, and will take place at the White House with a focus mainly on economic policy and development.

"In addition, governor Torres will discuss the agenda with federal officials for the requested 902 talks [or direct consultation] with the White House," Blanco added.

Meantime, Torres and Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog have appointed chief of parole, Shirley Camacho-Ogumoro, as the special assistant for administration replacing Esther S. Fleming.

Her appointment becomes effective early next month.

The continuing reorganization comes after members of the cabinet and special assistants submitted their courtesy resignations to Torres as part of the ongoing transition period following the passing of late governor Eloy S. Inos in December.

In an email, Torres said he and Hocog are pleased with the new appointment.

"This unique position serves as the conduit with which to connect all departments, agencies, the general public, and the private sector with the administration's plans and goals," Torres said. "I know Shirley is a perfect fit and will be an added asset to this administration. I ask for everyone's usual support and cooperation as she transitions into this position. Acting governor Hocog and I appreciate her accepting this appointment." ***(Dennis B. Chan)***

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Aging Center gets approval of CNMI State Plan

At the helm, marking major accomplishments, director Walter Manglona has for the first time in over 20 years at the Office on Aging, under the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, ensured the well-being of the islands' *man'amko* after successfully completing and certifying the 2015 National Aging Program Information System (NAPIS) State Program Report.

According to Manglona, the four-year CNMI State Plan on Aging he had authored had also been approved, adding that the approval is an essential accomplishment in addition to the Senior Community Service Employment Program grant modification and the SCSEP grant application approvals for the well-being of the elderly.

Since becoming director, the Office on Aging has been certified three years in a row with the National Aging Program Information System, he says.

"The National Association of State Units on Aging (NASUA), with funding from the Administration on Aging (AoA) under the Administration for Community Living (ACL), has engaged Synergy Software Technologies Inc. to develop a software reporting structure for the State Program Report (SPR) section of the National Aging Program Information System (NAPIS). For the first time in over 20 years the CNMI Office on Aging was able to accomplish this," he said.

In an email from state liaison for the CNMI under the Administration for Community Living of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Anna Cwirko-Godycki lauded Manglona's efforts and dedication on maintaining NAPIS standards and requirements.

"I appreciate our conference calls and collaboration during this time. You have moved the program forward. I enjoy working with you, trust you, and I am willing to provide as much technical assistance as I can. One example of your success is that for 20 years we have tried to obtain a report via our NAPIS system from the Office on Aging and we were pleasantly surprised when you were able to submit an online NAPIS report with CNMI data," she said.

Since his appointment as director in 2013, the agency has seen an increase in client participation at the Saipan, Tinian, and Rota centers.

"We have increased our list of activities and services to our elders at the Senior Centers [including] more health programs (BP/H1C checkups) and nutritional education to keep our *man'amko* healthy and strong," he said.

According to the Office on Aging's Action Plan for 2016, the agency's ultimate vision is for the elderly and people with disabilities to have the opportunity to fully participate in all aspects of society and community life and be continuously productive, be able to maintain their health and independence for as long as time allows, and remain in their own homes and communities for as long as possible without the isolation of life in institutions such as nursing homes.

With this vision, director Manglona and Office on Aging staff over the past year have conducted outreach assessment to homebound clients and caregivers to update information and receive feedback, as well as inform clients of the programs and services available at the center, including respite care and legal assistance.

Manglona adds that the CNMI SCSEP officially inputted its first participant in unsubsidized employment at the Rota Mayor's Office within the past year as well as successfully completing the 2015 CNMI SCSEP State Plan Modification and Corrective Action Plan, which was approved on March 28, 2015.

The AoA also solidified its prevention of abuse, neglect and exploitation program while the CNMI Office on Aging under the Title VII program provides funding for an attorney from the Office of the CNMI Attorney General to meet directly with the elderly registered in the program and to provide them with legal advice and assistance in legal matters.

Manglona shares that the Caregiver/Respite Care Program, through funding from the National Family Caregiver Service Program, is able to assist family members caring for individuals who are 60 years of age and older by providing respite care to all eligible caregivers.

"This program ensures that those family members and other caregivers supporting older individuals are able to provide adequate services to those in need. The Office on Aging provides respite care to alleviate stress and prevent burn out, each registered caregiver can avail to this program once a month. The service is provided by the Marianas Visiting Nurses," he said.

In addition to the many programs, Manglona adds that "in order to improve services, we began an outreach program in which Office on Aging staff conduct regular visits to homebound clients and caregivers to request feedback on services and hear any complaints and/or suggestions. This was also an opportunity for staff to watch for any signs of possible elder abuse and/or neglect… [and provide] health screening, exercise/health promotion programs, and transportation services for errands. In addition to their daily activities, clients can now enjoy karaoke, basketball, yoga, ukulele class, art class, bowling, dance class, ground golf, and water therapy..."

He noted that on Rota, beautification projects for the center commenced with Rota Municipal Council, Department of Public Work and Commonwealth Ports Authority providing assistance.

On Tinian, the agency completed a structure to hold five tanks of propane gas for the Tinian Aging kitchen. Materials for construction were donated by the previous Tinian Municipal Council with Mayor Joey P. San Nicolas assigning six personnel to the Tinian Office on Aging for two assistant cooks, two *man'amko* assistants, one bus driver and one maintenance worker.

Over the last couple of years, the agency served thousands of meals to active congregants and the homebound elderly. Currently, the Saipan Aging Center serves 91 active congregates 213 homebound elderly and 172 caregivers. The Tinian Center serves 21 congregates, 36 homebound elderly, and 18 caregivers and Rota serves 35 homebound, 38 congregates and 15 caregivers.

Manglona illustrates that despite the state of disaster brought upon by Typhoon Soudelor, the center's restoration and ensuring the well-being of the community's elderly continues.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres expressed that the presence, guidance and direction provided by the agency and the *man'amko* in the community is invaluable.

"As a community we must take those lessons of compassion and care, we must strengthen our value for wisdom and respect and advocate for the well-being of our *man'amko,*" he said.

The Office on Aging, through its various programs and supports has pro-actively implemented a wide range of functions relative to planning and advocacy that have assisted *man'amko* to lead meaningful and dignified lives.

The Office on Aging was made possible through the Older Americans Act in 1974 with the CNMI Office on Aging tasked to serve and provide needed assistance to all senior citizens and caregivers by administering programs and activities promoting independent living, building self-esteem, and providing opportunities for seniors to play an active role in the community.

For more information on the Office on Aging, contact (670) 233-1321/2. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB16-BECQ-055

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: MARCH 01, 2016 **TIME: 10:00 A.M.**

"PURCHASE OF A SERVER FOR THE BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND COASTAL QUALITY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY **LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN,** DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ FRANK M. RABAULIMAN
ADMINISTRATOR OF BECQ

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Prime Pacific Properties, Inc. dba: Beacon Hill Condominium

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Prime Pacific Properties, Inc. dba: Beacon Hill Condominium is proposing to construct and operate an eleven storey condotel with 15 units of two to three storey villas. This use is classified as "Planned Development over 48ft" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This proposal is located on lot #069 D 05 along Isla Drive in Navy Hill. This lot is zoned as Rural.

Date: February 25th, 2016, Thursday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, Wednesday, February 24, 2016 or via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp , or US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

NOTICE OF ZONING BOARD PUBLIC HEARING

for

Guangdong Development Company Ltd.

The public is invited to attend and provide comments at a Zoning Board public hearing on this request for Conditional Use Permit. Guangdong Development Company Limited is proposing to manufacture concrete hollow blocks in two existing warehouse structures. This use is classified as "Manufacturing & Processing" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located in San Antonio along Aftetna Road on lot 550 NEW-8-R1. It is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

Date: February 25, 2016, Thursday
Time: 5:00 pm
Place: Zoning Board Conference Room, 2nd Fl. Joeten Dandan Comm'l Bldg.

The above application may be viewed at the Zoning Office, 2nd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan. Comments on the project may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Written comments shall be submitted in writing to the Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, Dandan, Saipan no later than 4:30pm, Wednesday, February 24, 2016 or via email to therese.ogumoro@zoning.gov.mp , or US mail to Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the public hearing, or if you require assistance, please call 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & Saipan Zoning Law of 2013).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Board Chairman

Notice of Zoning Board Meeting

The regular meeting of the Zoning Board will be held on Thursday, February 25, 2016 at 5:00 PM, Zoning Board Conference Room 2nd floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Bldg
(Tel: 234-9661 ● Fax: 234-9666 ● e-mail: www.zoning.gov.mp)

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of 1/28/16 meeting minutes
5. Public Comments *(not related to files for discussion under item B. Public Hearings)*

B. Public Hearings

Conditional Use Application #2016-0136: Prime Pacific Properties, Inc. dba: Beacon Hill Condominium is proposing to construct and operate an 11 storey condotel with 15 units of two to three storey villas. This use is classified as "Planned Development over 48ft" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This proposal is located on lot #069 D 05 along Isla Drive in Navy Hill. This lot is zoned as Rural.

Conditional Use Application #2016-0468: Guangdong Development Company Limited is proposing to manufacture concrete hollow blocks in two existing warehouse structures. This use is classified as "Manufacturing & Processing" and is permitted in the district as a Conditional Use. This project is located in San Antonio along Aftetna Road on lot 550 NEW-8-R1. It is zoned as Mixed Commercial.

C. Communications
D. Old Business
E. New Business
1. Office Operations Reports (Permits, Enforcement)

F. Executive (Closed) Session
G. Miscellaneous: Other Matters, Announcements, Next Meeting, Adjourn.

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogumoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

55 earn AHLEI hospitality certificates

JON PEREZ

Some of the seniors from Kagman, Marianas, and Saipan Southern high schools proudly display their globally recognized certificates after completing the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute's hospitality program last Tuesday at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Fifty-five senior students from three high schools on Saipan—Kagman, Marianas, and Saipan Southern high schools—earned their certificates from the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute after successfully completing the hospitality program.

They received their globally recognized AHLEI certificates last Tuesday night in a simple ceremony held at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort. They are the fourth group of students that successfully completed the program since it started in 2014.

Maureen Sebangiol, who handled the administrative side of the program under Island Training Solutions, said those who have completed the course could now get hired once they graduate. The course also credits as one semester of elective credits.

"The program is specifically for seniors where they are trained in order to get in the job market pool. If there are not enough high school seniors, then the program accepts juniors. Seniors who complete the program could get hired quickly since they are trained under the AHLEI course," said Sebangiol.

The AHLEI certification course is provided in cooperation with the CNMI Public School System and the Latte Training Academy. Students, juniors or seniors, who completed the AHLEI program and received the globally recognized certification that could secure employment in the hospitality industry.

PSS funds the program where 25 students each from KHS, MHS, and SSHS can be admitted. The program started with 17 students from the three high schools in 2014.

The course is part of the curriculum of the normal school semester and is held after school on each of the three high schools. It involves nine hours of classroom instruction with outside reading per week.

The instructors have experience and background in the hospitality industry. Larry Lee, Tyce Mister, and Kanae Quinn were the instructors for KHS, MHS, and SSHS, respectively.

Students under the program earn the opportunity of "job-shadowing" that provides hands-on training in different departments in the hotels or resorts on Saipan. They also learn about resume writing, interview skills, and job search.

Man gets 6-month prison term for receiving stolen Buddha statue

The second suspect in the burglary at a doctor's house in Garapan last year has entered a guilty plea and was slapped with a six-month prison term.

Bruce M. Iglecias, 33, pleaded guilty on Tuesday afternoon to the offense of receiving stolen property.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo accepted Iglecias' guilty plea and the plea agreement.

Govendo sentenced the defendant to one year in prison, all suspended except six months.

The defendant was given credit of 180 days for time served. It means that he will be released from the Department of Corrections on April 6, 2016 at 8am.

After his release, the defendant will be placed on probation for one year. He was ordered to pay a $1,000 fine, $25 for court costs, and $100 for probation service fee.

Iglecias was required to perform 300 hours of community work service, stay away from the residence of Dr. Chao Hon Chiu during the probationary period, and write a letter of apology to the victim.

The defendant was required to complete drug and alcohol counseling and is prohibited from consuming alcoholic beverages during the probationary period.

Assistant attorney general Heather P. Barcinas appeared for the government. Attorney Daniel Guidotti served as counsel for the defendant.

According to the factual basis of the plea deal, Iglecias received a Buddha statue knowing that it has been stolen from the owner, Chiu, between Aug. 23 to 26, 2015.

Iglecias' co-defendant, Patrick Nick H. Muna, 19, pleaded guilty in November 2015 to theft and burglary in connection with the burglary at Chiu's house and stealing a battery from a Federal Emergency Management Agency's generator.

Muna was slapped with a prison term of three years and six months for both cases.

Muna admitted that he and Iglecias were behind the burglary at Chiu's house last Aug. 24.

Police said Muna and Iglecias were also responsible for the burglary at Flor's Hair Salon and Girl Talk in the same one-storey commercial building on Beach Road, Garapan.

Chiu's house is located behind the same commercial building. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

MCS congratulates Math Court winners

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Mount Carmel School students who took part in the recent Math Court meet held at Koblerville Elementary School pose with their teacher-coaches.

Mount Carmel School congratulates her Knights who fared well in the recent Math Court meet held at Koblerville Elementary School. They are the following:

1st Grade
Leah Lansangan (1st place, C13)
Shaminur Sulyman (2nd place, C15/A1)

2nd Grade
Heleyna Frielle Dela Santa
(3rd place, C16/A2)
Emmanuel Pontiveros
(4th place, E26)
Jessiana Tenorio
(3rd place, C15)

3rd Grade
Nathaniel Clark (1st place, E26)
Claire Kautz
(4th place, C16/A2)
Dylan Santos
(4th place, E26)

7th Grade
Dea Hun Kim

Mount Carmel also extends its thanks to their teacher-coaches. ***(PR)***

SAIPAN HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 *et seq.*, as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance (SHEFA) Board hereby gives notice the Regular Monthly Board Meeting is set for Thursday, February 18, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. at the Saipan Mayor's Office Conference Room, Ladera Center, Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. **Preliminary**
  1. Call to Order
  2. Roll Call
  3. Adoption of Agenda
  4. Adoption of Minutes from January 21, 2016

II. **Public Comments**
  1. None

III. **Reports**
  1. Administrator
  2. Chair
  3. Board Committees
    a. Committee on Award
    b. Committee on Policy and Procedures
    c. Committee on Program and Development
    d. Committee on Appeal
    e. Committee on Fiscal, Legislative and Community Affairs

IV. **Old Business**
  1. Revisit Priority Fields
  2. Propose to Increase Scholarship Amount

V. **New Business**
  1. Spring 2016 Semester Application Status
  2. SHEFA Functional Chart
  3. Deferment

VI. **Executive Session**
  1. Appeals/Deferments/Forbearance

VII. **Miscellaneous**

VIII. **Next Board Meeting**

IX. **Adjournment**

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the policy of the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) to limit hiring to qualified US workers, as restricted by CNMI law, and that equal opportunity be given to all qualified US worker applicants regardless of age, sex or sexual orientation, religion, marital status, political status, veterans status, disability or place of origin.

Opening Date: 02/08/16 **Closing Date: 02/22/16***

JVA#15-007: **Marketing Specialist I**
Annual Salary: $17,700.92 – $18,584.42**
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

JVA#15-008: **Community Projects Coordinator I**
Annual Salary: $17,700.92 - $18,584.42**
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

JVA#15-009: **Accountant II**
Annual Salary: $19,511.46 - $22,576.96**
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

JVA#15-010: **Procurement Officer**
Annual Salary: $24,889.35 - $31,757.68**
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

JVA#15-012: **Tour Guide Certification Manager**
Annual Salary: $30,000.00 - $40,000.00**
Location: Marianas Visitors Authority, Saipan

* If not filled, the vacancy announcement will be continued and applications will be reviewed every two weeks thereafter until the search is closed. Deadlines that fall on a non-business day will be extended to the next business day.
** The salary given will be determined by the qualifications of the appointee.

Interested persons may contact the Marianas Visitors Authority Office at (670) 664-3200/01 for more detailed information on position description. A completed application must be submitted together with the required documents for consideration until search is closed. A resume may be attached, but the application form must be filled out in full. MVA is an equal opportunity employer.

'No Conclusions have been drawn on divert plans'

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation chair Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Sen. Francisco Cruz (R-Tinian), Senate President Francisco Borja (Ind-Tinian), Rep. Edwin Aldan (Ind-Tinian), and Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Joey Patrick San Nicolas pose for a group photo.

Tinian and Aguiguan Mayor Joey P. San Nicolas and the Tinian leadership welcome continued open lines of communication with the Department of Defense with regards to the Air Force's proposed plans to conduct "divert" training activities and exercises exclusively on the island of Tinian.

"I think that it is premature to say that we fully welcome divert training exercises and activities when at this point, we do not know what these plans fully entail given that DOD has only announced that Tinian is now its 'preferred alternative,'" said San Nicolas.

In 2012, the Tinian and Aguiguan Legislative Delegation passed a resolution welcoming divert training activities to Tinian with the understanding that the plans will be complimentary to Tinian's desire to enhance the infrastructure at the air and sea commercial ports for its tourism and gaming industry.

"In 2012 when the Tinian delegation gave its full support to divert training activities and exercises, it was our belief that the airport would be benefited by the infrastructure that would be built as it could be jointly used for commercial activities. We believed then that this would allow us to welcome international flights that would ultimately benefit our economy," said TALD chair Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian).

"The 2012 plans, the plans being presented today and the opportunity for Tinian's economic development are substantially different from when we gave our blessing to these plans four years ago."

The Tinian leadership has not yet had the opportunity to fully engage in dialogue with the DOD to discuss what the actual proposed plans are and how the plans would ultimately impact the community of Tinian. "We believe that the announcement that Tinian is the 'preferred alternative' is only the beginning of preliminary discussions between the people of the CNMI, DOD and most importantly, the community of Tinian who will ultimately be most impacted either negatively or positively, by the divert plans," said Senate President Francisco Borja (Ind-Tinian). "The leadership and the community must be given the opportunity to assess the proposal, determine what the actual benefits and burdens are to the community and determine whether these plans can co-exist with our tourism and gaming industry."

San Nicolas also expresses his concerns over the potential overlap and connection between the divert training exercises, the CNMI Joint Military Training exercises (CJMT), the Marianas Islands Training and Testing (MITT) exercises and the Marianas Islands Range Complex (MIRC) exercises. "While the proponents of the divert would like us to believe that these different planned exercises do not overlap, we must do our own due diligence to look at these plans for ourselves and ensure that our community is protected," said Tinian Municipal Council chair Reynaldo M. Cing. ***(PR)***

'Take full advantage of hospitality certification courses'

The Latte Training Academy launched its Hospitality Specialty Certification Courses last Monday, Feb. 15.

The condensed specialty courses allow participants to train and test for a certification in a focused area of hotel operations. Participants will be able to earn a globally recognized industry certification from the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI), which has served as the highest standard in the industry. The courses will be offered in succession of one another, with each course lasting approximately three weeks.

"The CNMI Department of Commerce encourages eligible participants to avail of the AHLEI Hospitality Specialty Courses offered through the Latte Training Academy as it prepares our citizens with an industry certification in the CNMI's. The certification equips participants with the skills they need to enter into the CNMI's hotel and hospitality workforce with recognized credentials. The program is funded through a grant provided under the US Department of Interior focused on aiding our community prepare for the impending labor transition," said CNMI Commerce Secretary Mark Rabauliman.

The program will offer participants specialty certifications to become a professional in the areas of food and beverage, front desk service and guest room attendants. In addition to classroom training, which will be held at the Marianas Business Plaza, participants will engage in a job-shadowing component at partner hotels prior to sitting for the certification examination.

"The CNMI, under the leadership of governor Torres encourages eligible citizens to take full advantage of this program. In line with his direction, the CNMI Department of Commerce is taking an aggressive approach to preparing our citizens with the skills and tools they need to earn gainful employment and aid in the impending labor transition. While the administration is working with federal agencies on policy matters relating to labor transition, it is imperative that we continue to equip our resident labor force with a variety of training programs to ensure we have a well-trained employment pool," said Rabauliman.

As space is limited, students who are not able to register following course maximums are reached will be placed on a waiting list. To learn more about the program or to register, please visit www.lattetrainingacademy.com or call 1-855-544-8500. ***(PR)***

Employers invited to NMC's Annual Career Fair

Northern Marianas College is inviting employers from different companies and organizations to participate in its annual Career Fair on March 4 at the Saipan World Resort Royal Taga room A. The fair will begin at 9am and end at 1pm.

The Northern Marianas College Career Fair provides government agencies, private sector companies, and non-profit organizations that are looking to fill key vacancies within their organizations to connect with prospective employees and job applicants. Organizations can promote their summer jobs, internships, and career opportunities to NMC students and graduates.

The following organizations have confirmed their participation for the upcoming Career Fair: CNMI Department of Labor, Saipan World Resort, CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality (BECQ), CNMI Coral Reef Initiative, Imperial Pacific International, Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc., Hyatt Regency Saipan, and DFS Saipan.

"NMC wants to give our current students and graduates opportunities for success, growth, individuality, and leadership," said Career Services manager Neda Deleon Guerrero. "We hope more organizations and companies join us to help current students and graduates to gain work experience and skills."

To participate in NMC's Career Fair, companies are asked to contact Neda Deleon Guerrero at 237-6759 or email at neda.dlguerrero@marianas.edu or visit www.marianas.edu. The Career Fair is co-sponsored by the College Access Challenge Grant program. ***(PR)***

Free Humanities grants workshop on Rota

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is hosting a workshop on its Community Grants Program next Thursday, Feb. 25, on Rota.

Through its Community Grants Program, the council awards competitive matching grants to community organizations and ad hoc groups to support a wide range of humanities projects consistent with the goals and objectives of its Strategic Master Plan.

The workshop will cover the grant guidelines including how to prepare your grant proposal and budget, as well as, share the goals and objectives listed in the Council's Strategic Master Plan.

The workshop will take place at the Sinapalo Elementary School cafeteria from 5:30pm to 7pm. It is free and open to the public, however, individuals are encouraged to register on or before February 24 to ensure that they receive a workshop packet. Registration forms are available online at www.northernmarianashumanities.org.

For more information about the workshop, please contact Eulalia V. Arriola at 235-4785/7. ***(PR)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Ordnance detonation set today in Marpi

The CNMI Emergency Operations Center, in conjunction with the Department of Public Safety, and Navy EOD, would like to inform the general public that they will be detonating live ordnances at Saipan Blow Pit in Marpi today from 1pm to 3pm.

The general location of this activity will be at Marpi area within 200 feet radius on all quadrants to 200 feet above ground level.

Due to the danger imposed by this activity, acting governor Victor B. Hocog is strongly advising the general public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators—to stay away from this area during the time and dates indicated.

The cooperation and understanding of the general public is greatly appreciated. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the CNMI Emergency Operations Center-Dispatch Center at telephone number 237-8000, VHF MARINE CHNL 16, and HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0 or dial CNMI 211 for this advisory. ***(PR)***

SSHS PTSA meeting on Feb. 25

Saipan Southern High School will have a Parent-Teacher-Student Association meeting on Feb. 25, starting at 5:45pm in the school cafeteria.

Everyone is invited to participate and receive updates on the school year and PTSA activities. Following the brief meeting, there will be mini workshop sessions that will provide valuable information on academic testing, financial aid for college, vocational training, and other relevant topics.

For more information, call SSHS at 664-4000 or Glenna Sakisat-Palacios Reyes, SSHS PTSA president, at 483-3278. Or you can find us on facebook.com/mantaptsa.

Thank you for involvement in the PTSA. We look forward to seeing you all. ***(PR)***

KHS progress report & Kagman Schools PTSA today

Kagman High School will be open to all stakeholders for mid-progress report today, Feb. 18, from 3:30pm to 5:30 PM in the Cafeteria.

Kagman Schools PTSA will be hosted in the KHS Cafeteria from 5:30pm to 6:30pm.

All Kagman Schools' stakeholders are invited to attend both events. ***(PR)***

Archaeologists present findings of Chamorros migration

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—Archaeologists say they have found evidence indicating that Guam's ancient Chamorros came from two waves of migration.

Archaeologist Judy Amesbury presented findings from the Naton Beach excavation on Tuesday to the Rotary Club of Tumon Bay. The excavation took place nearly a decade ago, but the report is just now being released, the *Pacific Daily News* reported.

At the Naton Beach site, archaeologists found more than 400 burials from the Pre-Latte Period and Latte Period of Guam. More than 150 burials were from the Pre-Latte Period, marking the largest number of burials from that time and ever recorded in the Marianas.

The Pre-Latte Period is from 1,500 B.C. until latte stones were introduced. The Latte Period started around 1,000 A.D. and ended with Spanish contact in the 16th century.

More than 20 years ago, Micronesian Archaeological Research Services did an excavation in Saipan and found more than 500 cone shell beads and fragments of bracelets that dated back 3,500 years or more. No human remains were found with the artifacts, leaving archaeologists unable to connect the ornaments with the people until excavating the Naton site.

Amesbury said about 1,700 ornaments consisting of shells and shark teeth were found on the human remains at the Naton site.

A majority of the ornaments were from the Pre-Latte Period. They mainly consisted of three types of cone shell beads and beads made from clam shells, bracelets, and tiger shark teeth necklaces. Others featured inlaid teeth and the use of an earthy pigment called ochre.

A small percentage of the ornaments were tied to Latte Period burials. Those ornaments were made from cone shell beads, including a type that was a different shape from the pre-latte cone shell beads. Inlaid teeth were not found in latte burials, but eight burials revealed teeth with incised patterns of horizontal, diagonal or cross-hatched lines.

The distinguishing features of the ornaments lead archaeologists to believe that two waves of migration occurred in Guam's history.

"(Archaeologists) never knew if the latte stones were just in situ cultural development that the people thought of making after a while or if it was a new group of people coming in," said Amesbury. "And now it looks like a new group of people. So that's very interesting to know that there was more than one wave of migration."

Hyatt secures in-kind sponsorship from Flame Tree TV

On Feb. 10, Chris Nelson, president of Flame Tree TV, proudly presented Hyatt Regency Saipan with a generous in-kind sponsorship of full sports coverage of the 20th Annual Charity Golf Classic event on April 23, 2016.

Flame Tree TV will design and play television advertising highlighting the past 20 years of the Charity Golf Classic. Players are encouraged to register as an early bird by April 18, 2016 with a discounted fee of $100. Look for more information about the tournament on an upcoming episode of *Sports Wrappers*, KSPN prior to the event.

On April 23, 2016, the day of the event, a professional photographer from Flame Tree TV will be on the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort west course capturing unforgettable moments of the players in action. Each player will receive a photo of his or her candid shot in action at the banquet that evening.

"Flame Tree TV is always happy to support our local community, and, in what other way than to help share the memory with the community. We are proud to partner with Hyatt Regency Saipan in their notable efforts for such a cause," said Nelson.

"We are sincerely thankful for the partnered business Flame Tree TV has with Hyatt Regency and as a generous sponsor covering the necessary media aspect of the 20th Annual Charity Golf Classic. We extend our gratitude to Chris Nelson and his team for the continued support for our local community," said Hyatt Regency general manager Nick K. Nishikawa. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Mariangela Mendoza, Hyatt Regency Saipan executive assistant; Maria Valentina Haberman, Hyatt Regency Saipan marketing communications manager; Tori Youngblood, Flame Tree TV anchor/reporter; Tyrell Pauling, Hyatt Regency director of food & beverage; Jillian Angeline, Flame Tree TV anchor/reporter; Christopher Nelson, Flame Tree TV president; Rosalyn Quintanilla, Hyatt Regency director of rooms; and Bob Coldeen, Flame Tree TV news director; pose for a photo after Flame Tree TV agreed to donate in-kind sponsorship of full sports coverage of the 20th Annual Charity Golf Classic event on April 23, 2016.

Proposed Navy solar project on Guam put on hold

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—The U.S. Navy's proposal to lease Guam property for a solar power project has been put on hold.

Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo announced Wednesday that she had halted the proposal. She cited concerns over how the project would impact a Navy plan to reduce its overall footprint on the island, *The Pacific Daily News* reported.

The Navy is loowking to lease property in south Finegayan and the former Tumon Tank Farm to build a solar power system. The project is not directly related to the military buildup.

Bordallo said any proposal seeking additional land use should be in line with the Navy's "net-negative" strategy, which calls for more efficient use of land already owned by the Department of Defense and a smaller footprint on Guam.

Gov. Eddie Calvo has raised similar concerns about leasing additional land for the proposal. He asked Bordallo to put the project on hold before any action is taken.

Bordallo notified Calvo in a letter Tuesday of her plans to halt the proposal, saying she fully supports the Navy's efforts to develop the island's capacity for sustainable energy. However, she said, "it is critical for DOD to engage with local leaders to ensure that our community's concerns are considered and adequately addressed as we move forward."

Delta donates round-trip tickets to Hyatt Charity Golf Classic

On Feb. 10, Chris Concepcion, Delta Air Lines sales account executive, proudly presented Hyatt Regency Saipan with a package donation of two round-trip economy class tickets to Japan with a total value of $2,244 to the 20th Annual Charity Golf Classic event. Make-A-Wish Foundation, the event's primary beneficiary, and the Northern Marianas Trades Institute (NMTI) is the other honored recipient.

"Delta® Air Lines is honored to support the Hyatt Regency Saipan 20th Annual Charity Golf Classic and its mission to support our local non-for-profit organizations," said Concepcion. "We are proud to partner with Hyatt Regency Saipan and especially the recipients. Make-A-Wish Foundation is known for making dreams come true. The Northern Marianas Trades Institute focuses its efforts in educating our local community members for continual growth and education, Delta Air Lines grateful for this opportunity and we encourage the community to partake in the exciting, upcoming tournament. We hope our donation will entice golfers to participate in this praiseworthy and event."

"On behalf of Hyatt Regency Saipan and the 20th Annual Charity Golf Class committee, we are truly thankful to Delta Air Lines for this valuable partnership. Through this joint effort we positively impact our island community that thrives," said Hyatt Regency general manager Nick K. Nishikawa.

Hyatt Regency will hold its 20th Annual Charity Golf Classic event on April 23 at LaoLao Bay Golf and Resort west course. For more information please contact 234-1234 ext. 26. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Tyrell Pauling, Hyatt Regency Saipan director of food & beverage; MariAngela Mendoza Hyatt Regency executive assistant; Carl Reyes, airport customer service supervisor; Nick K. Nishikawa, Hyatt Regency general manager; Rosalyn Quintanilla, Hyatt Regency director of rooms; Chris Concepcion, Delta Air Lines sales account executive; pose for a photo after the carrier agreed to donate round-trip tickets to the 20th Annual Charity Golf Classic event on April 23, 2016.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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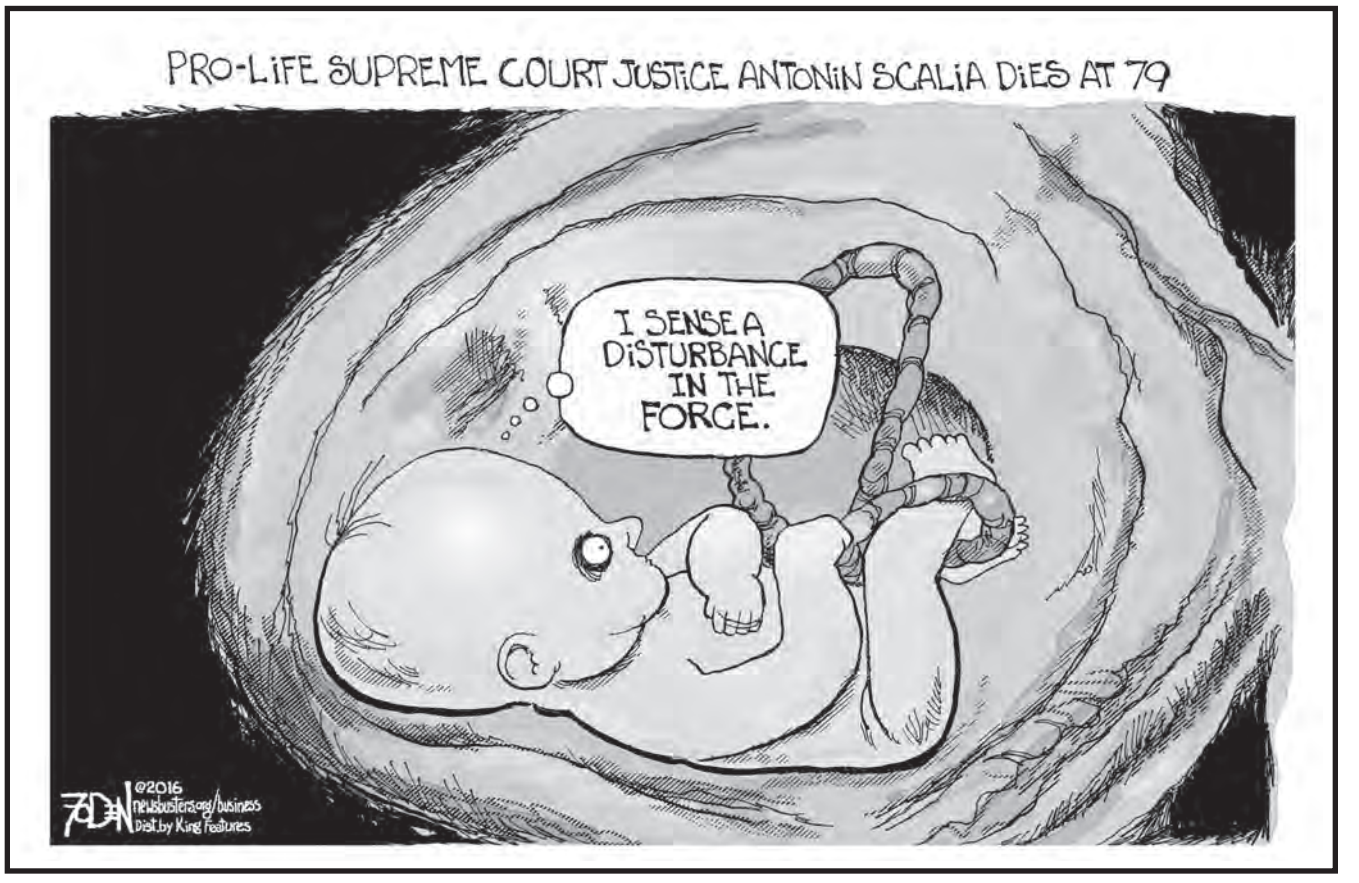
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association


PRO-LIFE SUPREME COURT JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA DIES AT 79
I SENSE A DISTURBANCE IN THE FORCE.
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EDITORIAL

For the Supreme Court, nominate a Democratic John Roberts

"We've always gone through periods when our democracy seems stuck. And when that happens, we have to find a new way of doing business. We're in one of those moments."— **President Barack Obama, Springfield, Feb. 10, 2016.**

When President Obama uttered those words in Illinois last week, urging bipartisan cooperation, he could not have guessed how relevant they would soon become—or how quickly they would be disregarded.

The death of Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, alas, quickly sent partisans to their battle stations. Republicans vowed to block any nominee, arguing that the decision should not be made by a lame-duck president. Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid retorted, "Failing to fill this vacancy would be a shameful abdication of one of the Senate's most essential constitutional responsibilities."

The president has indicated he will submit a nomination. The question is: What kind? If Obama is sincere in his wish for a new spirit of compromise, he can demonstrate it, and perhaps inspire it, by looking for someone acceptable to reasonable people on either side of the aisle.

Senate Republicans don't hold all the cards here. If they appear obstructionist, they could not only damage the GOP presidential nominee but torpedo some of the incumbent Republican senators facing re-election this year. Republican leader Mitch McConnell has to wonder whether holding to a hard line on the court vacancy could mean losing the Senate.

Obama obviously is not going to win over the opposition party with a liberal dream candidate _ the Democratic version of Scalia. If he is to have any hope of getting his nominee approved, the candidate will have to be a Democratic version of John Roberts or Anthony Kennedy _ experienced, respected legal figures who, from their records, could not be counted as automatic votes for one side.

What Obama should be looking for is someone who sees the role of a justice much like Roberts outlined it in his confirmation hearings: "Judges are like umpires. Umpires don't make the rules; they apply them. The role of an umpire and a judge is critical. They make sure everybody plays by the rules, but it is a limited role." Roberts and Kennedy, appointed by Republican presidents, have sometimes disappointed Republicans.

There is no shortage of candidates who would verify Obama's willingness to meet the other side halfway. One is Sri Srinivasan, who served in the Solicitor General's Office under President George W. Bush and Obama and was confirmed for the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit by a unanimous vote of the Senate. Another is Merrick Garland, chief judge of that court, who is considered a moderate.

Or the president could break the usual mold of candidates and choose someone from elective office—say Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., a former prosecutor and member of the Judiciary Committee known for working with Republicans, or Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., who calls him-

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Gueku na mañan kabisiyu

By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.
Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune *and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the* Saipan Tribune.

Megai man-mamadedese! Esta ti namagof manbisita piot ya un` fagcha`e tautau-ta gi señgsoñg `sino sagan linahyan ya sige masañgan didog pinadesen niniha.

Dispues de 38 años deste ke ta gobietnan maisa hit debi u fitme pisun ekonomia `nai megai appottunidat para i tautau-ta siha. Ti este masusesede. Anog na dañkulu na diskuidu fumatoigue hit gi halom este na tiempu. Hita dumispone finaposta.

`Nai taya` satton na areglon immigrasion gi banda-ta ha amot hit i federat nu este na putdet. Estague` tutuhon matompu` ekonomian iya Marianas `nai tumaigue otru kanai para u chogue checho`ña kabales. Debi disposision immigrasion (numeron hutnaleru) u sisiha yan planun adelantu.

Ta fatañgaye i asuntu estake ha rompe hit. Sige pa`gu manensinahyau yan man-afaisen hit haf` masusede. Klaru na diskuidun ginen halom. Lastima i machuchuda` salape` gi mediu ochenta siha na sakan. Dispues maliñgu kulan chiop sirenu! Ti komprendiyon kau ti malili`e ni man-ma`gas haf` konsekuensan diskuidu gi bandan niha? Na ti kontodu i publiku mana` kahaga` gi diskuidun niha?

Tai esperansa-yu` kau uma-aregla este na finatsu ensegidas. Tinaka` tiempu (`nos kuantos sakan) estake u danche chachalaña i administrasion para manugue`. Gi pa`gu, adahe monedan familia ya in`na`e animu fumachuchu`e nesessidat miyu de hemunos de pagyu, linau yan dilubiu!

Gi halom este na rimulinu megai gi tautau-ta man-dilinkuente apas primet na guma` familia. Guaha man-kakantu para u fan ma-amot ni uttimu propiadat. Hafa mohon hahale`ña este na chinatsaga? Na ti ginen chafleg ekonomia `nai megai na familia man-e`ensinahyau sa` taya` adelantu gi ginanan `sino monedan familia? Todu presiun nesessidat mañgahulu` mientras i sueddu masimientu gi mismu lugat. Halo?

Indikasion: I madisgranan asuntun metkao guma` (maseha manu) i primet indikasion pot kondision ekonomian i tanu`. Estegue` masusesede guine! Chafleg i tanu` `nai kontodu kinalamten familia fiñiñot sin ditension. Mientras ha lalasa bulachun iluña i hegsu` I Deni mas mafondu kualidat linala` tautau-ta siha gi señgsoñg.

I maliñgun gima` familia mampos te`ug na aminasu. Siña guaha parientes man-offrese ayudu temporariamente estake siña i madisplanta na familia mañoda` otru fanliheñg. Gi entalu` kinalamten alibiu kontodu ha`anen famaguon man-inaminasa.

I pinasensian tautau-ta sige mas kanifes. Kulan abubu ni siempre un` dia u pakpak ya umachalapon yan minaipen tautau. Mas potput i airen diniskontentu gi señgsoñg siha. Dididi` ha` na mañila` maches para u pakpak yan kimason. Mapot mapunu` guafiña.

Pinadese: Man-a`asita hit gi haf` na fina` gotpe `sino didog na chinatsaga. Naturat este na sentimentu gi halom natibu piot `nai makat asunto-ta.

I manahanau malañgu para hospitat hiyuñg Marianas sessu na tiempu masusede. Deste kanset, korason, yan otru siha manseriosu na chetnot fumatoigue tautau-ta siha.

Hu komprende sa` hu padese lokue` gi familiag-hu yan guahu mismu. Makat na tiru gi katkuet kinalamten deste monedan familia yan giya hita mismu. Estague` na estau `nai hu appela-yu` enteramente futtuna-hu gi disposisioña. I inañgogho-hu gi Saina muna lañahlalañg sinienteg-hu.

Deste ayu hu gu`ot fitme i imahen kilu`us gi chagu` hogsu kumu premiu-hu yan gachoñg-hu diariu! Gi uttimu besis siempre un` finanu`e haf` sustansian finaiseña giya hagu. Taya` mas ke inañgog-hu giya guiya. I finaisen-hu gi tinayuyot-hu todu i tiempu hanana`e-yu`. Siña ha` ti direktamente lau hana` fattu.

Afañielos, mauleg ta prekura muna` fanhomlu` hit, ta adahe i dididi` na monedan familia ya ta kahlañg ha`anita giya guiya kumu solu gachoñg-ta ti finatton yan hinanau ha`ane. Yangin siña un` ayuda haye numesessita alibiu, na geftau hau sa` ti un` faliñgu gi birada. Hahassu ha` finaisen i Saina: ayudu gi mannamase` yan mamopble siha na mañeluta.

**Te`ug** ña **problema:** Lamegai na tautau-ta man-hanau para otru lugat tat kumu Guam. I motibu layeye pot inaligau mas libianu na modun linala`. Lau megai lokue` fumagcha`e chinatsaga gi hechuran taya` fanliheñg, cho`chu` yan karetan familia.

`Nai matotpe chinatsaga, man-ma`aligau tautau-ta ni matuñgu` na man-ginen sankattan na Marianas ya man-ensinahyau ayudu deste neñkanu` yan otru siha nesessidat. Makat para siha yan i ma-okukupa na tautau-ta ni umekstende ayudu.

Haf` tinatten este na pinadese? Mali`e na taya kampun appottunidat gi tano`ta na man-hanau i los prohimus. Madiñgu sasalaguan ya matotpe otru sasalaguan. Lau i tutuhon este na pinadese ha tutuhongue` guine. I baban kinalamten i tanu` mina` manensinahyau inaligau alibiu otru lugat para i familian niha.

Haye para ta sogne nu este na te`ug chinatsaga guine?

**Ke`yau si Mariana:** `Nai fatsu rinikohen aduana (tax) ya mampos dididi` para i kantidan dibi yan obligasion gobietnu, hinegse yan kinebra papa` gi fache` litiku sa` kara` i tresurariu.

Hahassu ha` na kada sakan na diskuidu, tres años tatte in` cheneg linala` i tautau. Makat este na asuntu in` komprende? Gi bente años na diskuidu, sisienta años tatte na estau `nai in` pega

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Jeb Bush's big brother makes him look small

By LEONID BERSHIDSKY
Bloomberg View

Leonid Bershidsky is a Bloomberg View columnist.

It was the mystery of the 2016 presidential campaign: Why wasn't Jeb Bush, who seemed a shoo-in for the Republican nomination and has the resources to go all the way, doing better in polls and primaries? In North Charleston, S.C., on Monday night, I got my answer.

Bush, who at first seemed unsure whether his last name was an asset or a liability—his posters, after all, just say "Jeb!"—has increasingly brought his family into his campaign in recent weeks. Barbara Bush, his mother, came to New Hampshire. On Monday, his older brother George W. Bush went to bat for him at the North Charleston Convention Center—and stole the show. In fact, his appearance was such a triumph that it became obvious that Jeb didn't quite measure up to the ex- president, for whom many Republicans feel nostalgia.

In the crowd of 2,000, I found myself standing next to Jim Zielinski, 66. He told me that his son, a West Point graduate, had been among the first U.S. troops to enter Iraq. The Army Ranger spent 15 months there, was in combat and was fortunate to come home intact. A year ago, Zielinski asked George W. Bush to sign a copy of his book, "Decision Points," at a trade event. He said he mentioned his son's service. "He spoke warmly of people like my son," Zielinski said. "That was special to me. He really supported the troops."

A veteran himself, Zielinski said he wasn't sure who he would back in South Carolina's Republican primary on Saturday: He was down to Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio, having dismissed Donald Trump as too centered on "the anger, not the promise" of America. He cheered loudly, along with many others, as South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham introduced the ex-president, thanking him for "keeping us safe" after the Sept. 11 attacks and "taking the fight to America's enemies."

George W. Bush immediately had the audience in his grip. He was relaxed and self-deprecating about his post-presidency downtime, which he called "the afterlife." "Laura and I became tree farmers," he said. "It gave me time to practice my stump speech. And I surprised everyone by becoming an oil painter. Don't worry, I know the signature is worth more than the paintings."

The crowd hushed as he recalled hearing about the Sept. 11 attacks as he read to a child in a Florida classroom. "My first reaction was hot: 'We're gonna deal with these people,'" he said. "Then my job became crystal clear: To protect that girl, her community and her country. I made a lot of tough calls, every one of them with an image of that child in my mind."

The ex-president's political craft was on full display. His speech was an exercise in not-so-subtle evasion: He never uttered Trump's name, though it was clear that he was referring to his brother's rival when he said, to laughter and applause, "Labels are for soup cans." And he avoided any mention of Iraq. He knows that even his supporters are uncertain about that war now. "The jury is still out on it," Zielinski told me, adding that it had been a mistake to pull out U.S. troops from Iraq once they were in.

But avoiding the most disastrous decision of his presidency was just fine with the Republican audience: These people had backed the intervention at the time. People don't like being reminded of their mistakes.

"Laura and I don't really miss our time in the White House," the ex-president said at one point. "We miss you!" the audience erupted. It was a spontaneous, wistful moment.

Yet George W. Bush isn't running for president, his brother is. And when Jeb Bush took the floor, it was an anticlimax. He went through his stump speech, lashing out at Trump, promising support to the military and to small business, listing again his achievements as governor of Florida. Many in the audience had heard all this during Republican debates. The candidate was earnest and fluent, but he wasn't one with his audience the way his brother had been. It was impossible not to recall one of George W. Bush's jokes: "Like me, Jeb is a grandfather. He is known as Gampy, I'm known as El Jefe."

The difference in charisma was palpable. It was as if the temperature in the room had come down 10 degrees.

To many Republicans, membership in the Bush family is not a stigma. They are willing to accept on faith that Bush 43 only made honest mistakes as he did his best to protect the country. The crowd clapped and cheered when Graham said, "I don't know about you, but I like the Bushes." In that sense, enlisting his family's help is a good move on Jeb Bush's part, though it may be too late to save his campaign. Yet this tactic is also hurting Jeb: Although the ex-president lovingly calls him "my big little brother," the candidate is too obviously just the little brother when they're on the same stage.

When the speeches were over, I asked Zielinski whether Jeb had won him over. The Charleston native just shrugged his shoulders. "We'll see."

COURT

From Page 10

self a "radical centrist."

Maybe the White House has in mind other prospects of this sort who would actually have a prayer of getting through the Senate. Republicans would be forced to choose between a comparative centrist now and a staunch liberal next year, if Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders is elected. Obama could boast that rather than make a partisan selection to please his Democratic base, he's nominating someone who at times may surprise and even flummox him in the coming decades. Just as Justices Roberts and Kennedy at times have surprised and flummoxed Republicans.

The alternative for Obama is to choose an unmistakable liberal for symbolic or ideological reasons. We realize suggesting that he do otherwise asks him to buck his political instincts. Many Democrats will be peeved if he doesn't choose someone in the mold of his earlier nominees now on the court, the usually reliable liberals Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

Sure, Obama's submission of a doomed choice now could be used to tar the GOP as intransigent and rally the Democratic faithful on behalf of the party's presidential nominee.

By taking that route, though, Obama would not only assure a protracted vacancy on the court but drive a bigger wedge between the two parties on Capitol Hill. If he wants to establish "a new way of doing business," this is his chance.

(c) 2016 Chicago Tribune

Bring back Justice O'Connor

By WILLIAM BLAKE and HANS HACKER
The Baltimore Sun

William Blake is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Hans Hacker is an associate professor of political science at Arkansas State University.

The death of Justice Antonin Scalia has already deepened the divide in American politics. Even when the president's party controls the Senate, Supreme Court confirmations are difficult; just ask President George W. Bush about what happened with Harriet Miers. In the midst of an open-seat presidential election, and with the White House and Senate controlled by opposing — and increasingly polarized — parties, it might seem impossible for President Barack Obama to put a new justice on the bench.

The key word there is new. To minimize the chances of a Senate filibuster, President Obama should nominate Sandra Day O'Connor. There is historical precedent for reappointing a former justice: Charles Evans Hughes stepped down from the court to run for president in 1916; in 1930, he rejoined the court as chief justice.

Justice O'Connor is nearly 86 years old, which would normally be considered a liability. Under these circumstances, her age is a significant asset. She is more than capable of serving on the court for a year or two, after which she could retire and the new president could use his or her political mandate to appoint a younger justice. Reappointing O'Connor would benefit Obama, the court, and, most importantly, the American people.

In 2006, O'Connor retired from the Supreme Court to care for her ailing husband. Since his death, she has used her status as a retired justice to hear several important cases on the federal courts of appeal. Her ability to write pragmatic judicial decisions hasn't diminished with age.

O'Connor's view of the law is a product of her remarkable life. Unlike the career judges who comprise the rest of the court, O'Connor took a different path. Before becoming a judge, she was the Republican majority leader of the Arizona Senate — the first woman in American history to lead a state senate. Elected officials bring a different perspective to the bench; Chief Justice Earl Warren, author of Brown v. Board of Education, engineered many crucial unanimous decisions using the instincts he honed as governor of California.

During her time on the bench, O'Connor was frequently labeled the court's swing justice, but that term is deceptive. It's not that she's some easily swayed judicial fence-sitter; it's that her jurisprudence doesn't fit neatly into an ideological box. She crafted carefully worded opinions, deciding cases on narrow legal grounds to prevent unforeseen social consequences.

Usually, presidents relish the opportunity to replace a justice appointed by a president from the opposite party. With less than a year in office, Obama has little chance of moving the court significantly to the left, but he could keep the court fully staffed.

Moreover, nominating O'Connor would increase gender diversity on the court and would be consistent with Obama's (often unsuccessful) philosophy of forging consensus and compromise.

Nominating O'Connor would also be a shrewd political move. Republican leaders routinely tout President Ronald Reagan as an icon; a vote against confirming O'Connor would be an admission that the patron saint of the modern Republican Party wasn't infallible. Senate Republicans couldn't question O'Connor's credentials. And they would be unable to cast her appointment as one that would shape the court for the next generation.

Beyond the Beltway political maneuvering, however, lies the greatest virtue of this Supreme Court compromise. With only eight justices, the Supreme Court risks tie votes in several crucial cases this term. In a 4-4 decision, the ruling of the lower court stands, and no precedent is set. It is as if the justices never heard the case in the first place.

A key function of the Supreme Court is settling disputes among the lower courts about how to interpret the Constitution and federal law. The Constitution cannot mean one thing in Alabama and something else in Wyoming. For the court to carry out its mission, it needs to avoid tie votes.

One way or the other, the presidential election will decide the long-term future of the court. The only question is whether Obama and Senate Republicans are more interested in scoring political points or keeping the court functioning this year. Reappointing O'Connor is the best way to achieve the latter. And, if an O'Connor appointment wins over public support, the eventual presidential nominees on either side will need to address the question of whether a doctrinaire liberal or conservative judicial philosophy truly is preferable to a pragmatic jurisprudence.

The one thing this election season has taught us is that the traditional political playbook no longer works. The same logic applies to this Supreme Court vacancy.

GUEKU

From Page 10

i publiku. Adelantu este pat mas sapet yan didog na chinatsaga?

Yahu lumi`e haye fitme yan mahegat na kabayeru. Malagu`yu` umekuñog haf` gaige gi hinasson miyu. Yangin parehu na karera i gueku para i tautau mientras in` hahatsa mas sueddon miyu, pues mañge adelantu para i mayotmente ni in` represesenta? Hamyu` ha` tumuñgu` haf` gaston linala`? Siempre tali`e haf` mamamaila` para hamyu!

Pot fabot muñga matrata i tautua kulan pinegsai babue ni in` pega gi halom mutuñg na fache` diskuidun miyu. Man-tautau i in` represesenta gi hegsu` I Deni`!

■■■

Ayudu para betiranu: `Nai dimalas dos sindaluta giya Iraq, megai mañaunau manmanagam ni dos tautau-ta `nai mattu tatte Saipan. Ta fatta sensian kilisyanu yan yine`ase` gi uttimu sakrifisiun niha madefende libettan todus gi papa` banderan Amerikanu.

Guaha lokue` bumira siha tatte man-felis. Lau mangai pinadese ya solu siha tumuñgu` i mafanana`an PSTD. Petmanente na paladañg gi hinassun yan mañan niha ya guaha `nai diariu man-inestotba. Huñgan manhanau pot ayudu gi hospitat guine `sino mediku ni mana`e nu este na katgu. I pinadese makat. I ayudu mauleg lau tinahuñg pot kulan tagfena pinadesen niniha.

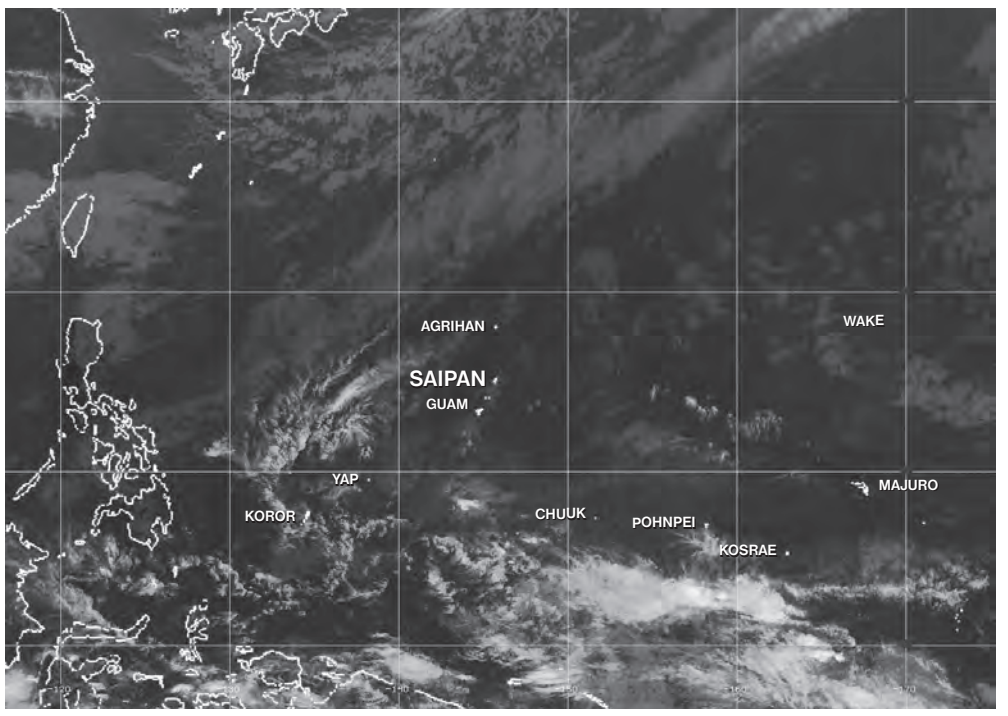
Todu modun paladang maña uma`anog giya siha mismu. Espantu pot rason na ni siha mismu ti matuñgu` taimanu para una` maguñg pinadesen niniha. Guaha mohon kampu para ta ayuda sin ditension este siha na betiranu?

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy wih isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy wih isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy wih isolated showers.
▲86° ▼75°	▲86° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°	▲85° ▼75°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 PM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front extends southwestward from 25N151E to 21N144E then continues as a shear line to beyond 130E at 14N. Cloudiness and patchy showers are found northwest of the Marianas along and up to 250 miles northwest of this boundary. A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from 2N133E through a disturbance centered southwest of Chuuk near 2N148E to end near EQ163E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are seen south of Chuuk, Pohnpei and Kosrae within 125 miles of a line from 4N150E to 2N164E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼77
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲85	▼79
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼79
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼79
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼79

Around the Globe

Auckland	Thunderstorms	▲80	▼69
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲48	▼24
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲65	▼60
Honolulu	Windy	▲79	▼69
London	Showers	▲42	▼29
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲73	▼56
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲90	▼72
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲77	▼59
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲79	▼60
New York	Partly Cloudy	▲45	▼29
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼38
Paris	Showers	▲43	▼32
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼38
Rome	Partly Cloudy	▲62	▼47
Salem	Showers	▲61	▼43
San Francisco	Rain	▲63	▼52
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲49	▼25
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲53	▼39
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	▲46	▼28

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:30 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet
10:28 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
3:40 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
11:15 PM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.1 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:41 AM	6:21 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	6:22 PM
Saturday	6:40 AM	6:22 PM
Sunday	6:39 AM	6:22 PM
Monday	6:39 AM	6:23 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	2:28 PM	2:42 AM
Friday	3:22 PM	3:36 AM
Saturday	4:15 PM	4:26 AM
Sunday	5:07 PM	5:14 AM
Monday	5:58 PM	5:59 AM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 24, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA2924	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA2922	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA2921	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA2920	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA2928	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA2926	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA2921	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA2921	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ628	3:50am	7:40am	Daily
7C3403	4:35am	8:20am	Daily
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	1, 3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)

MU7162	5:10am	08:00am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:10am	11:15am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:15am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA2924/191	4:15am	9:00am	3, 6 via GUM
UA2924/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:30pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA2922/183	8:40am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA2922/193	8:40am	11:10pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:30pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA2921/183	1:30pm	9:50pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:30pm	2 via GUM
UA2920/183	2:20pm	9:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA2920/193	2:20pm	11:10pm	2 via GUM-ROR
UA2926/191	9:50pm	7:20am+1	1, 6 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ628/721	3:50am	12:50am	Daily via ICN
UA2922/159	8:40am	10:35pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA2921/159	1:30pm	10:35pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA2920/159	2:20pm	10:35pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA2923	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA2925	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA2921	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA2920	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA2927	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA2929	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA2920	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA2920	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:35am	3:10pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
OZ627	9:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily
7C3404	10:10pm	3:30am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	1:50am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6, 7

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN

MU7161	10:00 pm	5:30am	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/2929	9:55am	9:20pm	2, 6, 7 via GUM
UA190/2929	10:00am	9:20pm	3 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:30pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/627	12:30pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
PR110/UA2925	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA192/2920	10:20pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/2925	11:59pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2920	11:59pm	1:50pm+1	2, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA184/2927	11:59pm	5:35pm+1	2, 5 via GUM
UA184/2929	11:59pm	9:20pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ724/627	2:20pm	2:50am+1	Daily via ICN
UA116/2925	10:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2921	10:55pm	1:00pm+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA116/2920	10:55pm	1:50pm+1	1, 5 via GUM-Rota
UA116/2927	10:55pm	5:35pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA116/2929	10:55pm	9:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Russia, Saudis tentatively offer to freeze oil output levels

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Oil powerhouses Russia and Saudi Arabia joined Qatar and Venezuela in pledging Tuesday to cap their crude output if other producers do the same, aiming to halt a slide that has pushed oil prices to their lowest point in more than a decade.

The decision followed an unexpected closed-door meeting involving the four countries in the Qatari capital, Doha, and reflects growing concern among big producers about the effects the slump poses to their domestic economies.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said in a statement issued after the meeting that the four countries would be ready to cap production based on last month's output levels if others join.

"We are ready to maintain on average in 2016 the level of oil production of January 2016 and not exceed it," he said in a subsequent statement.

Whether the plan is enough to put a floor under prices is uncertain. The proposal depends on cooperation from a range of producers with differing budget priorities all scrambling for market share since prices began falling in summer 2014.

Among the hardest to bring on board will likely be Iran. It was noticeably absent from Tuesday's gathering even though it shares control of a major underwater natural gas field with fellow OPEC member Qatar.

Iran is eager to ramp up its exports now that sanctions related to its nuclear program have been lifted, saying recently it aims to put another 500,000 barrels a day on the market. Figures from the International Energy Agency show it pumped 2.9 million barrels daily in December, before sanctions were lifted.

Iran's petroleum minister, Bijar Namdar Zangeneh, signaled the Islamic Republic has no intention of giving up its share of the market. He acknowledged that global markets are "oversupplied," but said Iran "will not overlook its quota," according to comments carried by his ministry's Shana news service.

AP

In this Sept. 30, 2015, file photo, oil pumps work in the desert oil fields of Sakhir, Bahrain.

Venezuelan Oil Minister Eulogio Del Pino heads to Tehran next for talks with his Iranian and Iraqi counterparts Wednesday.

"The key OPEC members that need to take part are Iran and Iraq, where the big increases are likely this year, but there are big doubts over whether this can be achieved," Barclays analysts Miswin Mahesh and Kevin Norrish said in a research note.

Efforts to make the plan work are complicated by deep levels of distrust between regional rivals Saudi Arabia and Iran, which has built close ties to Iraq's government in the years since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

The two countries are in opposing camps in regional disputes from Yemen to Syria. Last month, Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic ties with Shiite powerhouse Iran after the Saudi embassy and a consulate were torched by Iranian protesters angry over the kingdom's execution of a prominent Shiite cleric.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Saudi Oil Minister Ali Naimi said producers would continue to assess the state of the market in the months ahead. He described freezing output at January levels as an "adequate" step for now.

All of the countries at Tuesday's meeting except Russia are part of OPEC. Saudi Arabia dominates policy-making within the 13-member bloc of oil producing countries, which has refused to cut its official production targets. Doing so could bolster faltering prices.

The aim of OPEC's keep-pumping strategy has been to attempt to ride out the 12-year lows in prices and force higher-cost producers, including shale drillers in the U.S., out of the market.

Global economy shaky and cavalry may not come

WASHINGTON (AP)—Eight years after the financial crisis, the world is coming to grips with an unpleasant realization: serious weaknesses still plague the global economy, and emergency help may not be on the way.

Sinking stock prices, flat inflation, and the bizarre phenomenon of negative interest rates have coupled with a downturn in emerging markets to raise worries that the economy is being stalked by threats that central banks—the saviors during the crisis—may struggle to cope with.

Meanwhile, commercial banks are again a source of concern, especially in Europe. Banks were the epicenter of the 2007-9 crisis, which started over excessive loans to homeowners with shaky credit in the United States and then swept the globe into recession.

"You have pretty sluggish growth globally. You don't really have any inflation. And you have a lot of uncertainty," says David Lebovitz, who advises on market strategies for JP Morgan Funds.

Some of the recent tumult may be an overreaction by investors. And the rock-bottom interest rates are partly a result of easy money policies by central banks doing their best to stimulate growth.

Unemployment is low in several major economies, 4.9 percent in the United States and 4.5 percent in Germany. The IMF forecasts growth picking up from 3.1 percent last year to 3.4 percent this year.

But that's still far short of the 5.1 percent growth in 2007, before the crisis. The realization is dawning that growth may continue to disappoint, and that recent turmoil may be more than just normal market volatility.

In Japan, the yield on 10-year bonds briefly turned negative, meaning bondholders were willing to pay the government for the privilege of being its creditor—for years. In the United States, long-term market rates are sliding again, even though the Federal Reserve has begun pushing them higher.

That's alarming because such low or negative rates are way out the ordinary. For one thing, they suggest investors don't expect much economic growth.

Here are some of the risks that markets have been waking up to.

CHINA

A sharp slowdown in China threatens to remove a pillar of global growth. Slackening demand for raw materials there is hitting producers of oil and metals in other countries. Energy exporter Russia, for instance, slid into recession and its currency has plunged.

German automaker Daimler made a record operating profit last year, helped by a 41 percent surged in sales in China for its Mercedes-Benz luxury cars. But its shares fell when it announced a cautious outlook for only a slight profit increase for 2016 and "more moderate" growth in China. CEO Dieter Zetsche cautioned that he saw "more risks than opportunities" amid "restrained" global growth.

EMERGING MARKETS, SUBMERGING

Money is flowing out of so-called emerging markets like Brazil, Russia, South Africa and Turkey. Investors pulled $735 billion out of such countries in 2015—the first year of net outflows since 1988, according to the Institute of International Finance.

And emerging markets aren't so emerging any more: they provide 70 percent of expected global growth.

Central banks led by the U.S. Fed responded to the global recession by slashing interest rates and printing money. That encouraged investors in search of higher returns to place their money in emerging markets.

Now the Fed is trying to push up its interest rates, and those flows have gone into reverse, causing financial markets and currencies in emerging markets to sag. Debt becomes harder to repay.

IMF chief Christine Lagarde has warned of "spillback" effects from emerging markets on more advanced economies.

Stephen Lewis, chief economist at ADM Investor Services, argues the Fed should simply go ahead with raising rates to a more normal level.

"Unless we're going to paralyze monetary policy in the advanced economies forevermore, it is inevitable that the funds that have gone into emerging markets are going to come back out of them," he said.

UNCLE SAM

The other pillar of the global economy besides China, the U.S., is also now showing signs of weakness. Maybe not a recession, yet. But growth was a weak 0.7 annually during the fourth quarter. Factory output has declined.

Though unemployment has dropped, wages have not recovered quickly and companies appear to be unsettled by the global jitters.

A rising dollar—a side effect of expected Fed interest rate increases—could hurt exporters. That's one reason the Fed may in fact hold off raising rates again soon.

BANKS

Banks stocks have been plunging in the U.S. and Europe.

In the U.S., low oil prices may mean companies involved in expensive drilling and extraction will be unable to repay loans made to dig wells that are no longer profitable.

In Europe, bank shares have been shaken by the bailout of four Italian lenders and fears about 1.2 trillion euros ($1.35 trillion) in bad loans across the 19 country currency union.

John Cryan, co-CEO of Deutsche Bank, had to take the unusual step of publicly reassuring that the bank's finances were "rock-solid" after investors pounded the bank's stock.

The spread of negative interest rates could reduce banks' profitability, since it squeezes the different between the rates at which banks borrow and at which they lend.

Sick banks can choke off credit to companies and dump huge costs on governments, shareholders and creditors.

RETURN-FREE RISK

Low rates help people pay mortgages and buy cars. But there's some concern that they suppress spending by savers, and may steer investment to less productive uses. The typical 10 million-yen ($87,900) in savings held by a household with a member over 65 would have earned $3,500 in 1995, but only returns $175 now, estimates Richard Katz, editor at the Oriental Economist.

"We're retired, so it would be nice to see them go up," said 75-year-old Lynne Metcalfe, who was having coffee and reading the morning paper with her husband in a Sydney shopping center Tuesday.

Metcalfe, a retired teacher, says she is part of a generation that lived frugally and thanks to that she and her husband haven't had to change their savings or investment strategies. And though they'd like to see the rates go up for their own sake, "for our son's sake, no," she says. "Because he has a mortgage."

OUT OF BULLETS?

With interest rates below zero in some cases, it's much harder for central banks to apply more stimulus if needed.

Low rates and stimulus in the form of bond purchases—using some $3.6 trillion in newly printed money in the case of the Fed—have driven up stocks worldwide.

Yet inflation has remained quiescent. U.S. consumer prices fell 0.1 percent in December. European inflation is only 0.4 percent annually, despite massive ECB stimulus.

So markets may be realizing this is one downturn where the central banks can't ride to the rescue as before.

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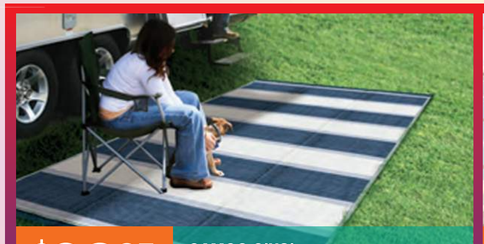

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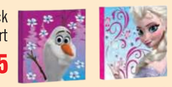

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Essential Home 18"X27" Doormat $4.95

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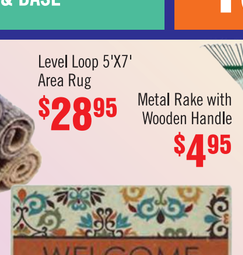

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MAJOR CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

Nation

Obama: No excuse for GOP not to vote on a court nominee

RANCHO MIRAGE, Calif. (AP)—President Barack Obama declared Tuesday that Republicans have no constitutional grounds to refuse to vote on a Supreme Court nominee, and he challenged his political foes in the Senate to rise above the "venom and rancor" that has paralyzed judicial nominations.

As Obama cast the dispute over filling the seat of the late Justice Antonin Scalia as a test of whether the Senate could function, there were early signs that Republican resistance could be eroding. Senate Judiciary Chairman Charles Grassley suggested he might be open to considering Obama's yet-to-be named nominee, an indication his party may be sensitive to Democrats' escalating charges of unchecked obstructionism.

"I intend to do my job between now and January 20 of 2017," Obama told reporters at a news conference. He said of the nation's senators, "I expect them to do their job as well."

AP
President Barack Obama answers questions during a news conference following the conclusion of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders summit at the Annenberg Retreat at Sunnylands in Rancho Mirage, Calif., Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2016.

Obama was in California for a meeting of Southeast Asian leaders gathered for two days of diplomacy. But his attention was divided at that conference.

Since Scalia's unexpected death at a Texas ranch on Saturday, White House lawyers and advisers have been scrambling to refine and vet a list of potential replacements, while also devising a strategy to push a candidate through the Republican-led Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said he doesn't think Obama should be putting a candidate forward. The Kentucky senator, as well as several Republicans up for re-election this year, say Obama should leave the choice up to the next president. The November election, they argue, will give voters a chance to weigh in on the direction of the court.

Obama dismissed that notion, insisting he will put forward a replacement and believes the Senate will have "plenty of time" to give the nominee a fair hearing and a vote. Democrats say Obama has every right and a constitutional duty to fill vacancies on the court until he leaves office next January.

Obama conceded the dispute reflects years of escalating partisan hostilities over judicial nominations and said Democrats' hands are not bloodless. Years of bickering have left the public accustomed to a situation where "everything is blocked"—even when there's no ideological or substantive disagreement, he said.

"This would be a good moment for us to rise above it," he said.

The pace of judicial confirmation always slows in a presidential election year, as the party that does not control the White House holds out hope that its candidate will fill vacant judgeships rather than give lifetime tenure to the other party's choices. In the past, lawmakers have sometimes informally agreed to stop holding hearings on lower court nominations during campaign season.

Chicago says it will release police shooting videos quickly

CHICAGO (AP)—The city of Chicago promised Tuesday to start more quickly releasing footage after police shootings, while activists critical of how authorities handled the videotaped fatal shooting of black teenager Laquan McDonald sought to have a special prosecutor take over the case.

They're the latest reactions to the shattered public trust in police officers, prosecutors and City Hall: One by attorneys, clergymen and some elected officials who say they've lost faith in Cook County's top prosecutor, and the other by a mayor trying to restore people's confidence in his office and police department.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who has heard repeated calls to step down, said he supported the new video policy recommended by the task force he created after the McDonald footage was released. His spokesman, Adam Collins, said the recommendations would be implemented immediately.

The Independent Police Review Authority, which investigates officer-involved shootings, plans to release videos and other evidence in all new cases as well as current investigations. The videos and other evidence would be released within 60 days, but law enforcement agencies can seek to delay that by another 30 days.

"Restoring trust between our police and the communities they're sworn to serve is an essential part of our City's public safety efforts," Emanuel said.

Trust was a clear factor in the petition for a special prosecutor. The civil rights attorneys and others say they want an outside prosecutor for the McDonald case and any further investigation into the shooting because of what they see as Cook County State's Attorney Anita Alvarez's close ties to the officers union. They say they don't trust her to aggressively investigate and prosecute Officer Jason Van Dyke, who is charged with first-degree murder.

Alvarez's "track record has undermined her credibility, created a crisis of confidence in her and her office, and created the appearance that this state's attorney cannot be trusted to zealously and effectively prosecute Officer Van Dyke," the petition reads.

They contend she has repeatedly demonstrated a reluctance to charge officers—something they said she made clear when she failed to charge Van Dyke for more than a year despite having the now-famous dashcam video of McDonald being shot 16 times as he seemed to be walking away from officers on Oct. 20, 2014.

Heat brings out beachgoers in West as other regions clean up

SAN DIEGO (AP)—John Larson sat on a blanket on a Southern California beach, furiously posting videos on Facebook of his sons jumping in the waves and bracing for the expletives from friends in Buffalo, New York.

It was 5 below zero when Larson and his sons left this weekend for their trip to San Diego, where a heat wave sent temperatures into the mid-80s on Tuesday.

"Oh yeah, they hate me," the 51-year-old graphic designer said of the response he got to his beach posts. "I get quotes like, 'Jerk!'"

Beaches in Southern California were crowded after the holiday weekend saw record-breaking heat from Los Angeles to San Diego, while the East Coast and the South cleaned up from a deep freeze and tornadoes.

It was even hotter in Phoenix. The National Weather Service forecast a high of 90 degrees Tuesday, which would be the earliest 90-degree day on record for the desert city. The normal temperature for this time of year is in the 70s. The previous mark was set on Feb. 24, 1986.

Phoenix also saw record highs last week as an unusually strong high-pressure system lingered.

The surge in temperatures has been bringing rattlesnakes out of hibernation. A fire agency in southern Arizona started getting calls in the last two weeks from panicked residents about the poisonous snakes on their yards and patios, something they don't usually see until late March and early April.

Millions along the East Coast, meanwhile, were still shivering from freezing temperatures.

A treacherous mix of snow, sleet and freezing rain caused car crashes from the Mid-Atlantic states through Pennsylvania to northern New England on Tuesday, a day after twisters tore through parts of the South.

At least three deaths were reported on slick roads, all in Virginia, and thousands were left without power from weather-caused outages.

Down South, people combed through the wreckage after a big storm system turned several homes to rubble Monday in the northwest corner of Florida's Panhandle and in Mississippi. More than a dozen homes were destroyed in both states, but there were no immediate reports of deaths or serious injuries, authorities say.

In the Pacific Northwest, a President's Day storm brought record rainfall and sent rivers overflowing their banks in Washington state.

ACROSS THE NATION

Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy to stay behind bars in Oregon

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy must stay behind bars, a federal judge ruled Tuesday, calling him a danger to the community after he arrived in Oregon to support the armed occupation of a national wildlife preserve led by his sons. U.S. Magistrate Judge Janice Stewart also said Bundy should not be released ahead of trial because there is a risk he won't show up for future court dates. Federal prosecutors called the 69-year-old "lawless and violent" in a document filed before the hearing, an assertion his attorney and family denied. "If he is released and he goes back to his ranch, that is likely the last the government will see of him," Stewart said. Bundy, 69, was arrested in Portland last week on charges stemming from a 2014 armed standoff with federal officials who were rounding up his cattle over unpaid grazing fees.

Possible suicides probed in death of sisters found with mom

HAWAIIAN GARDENS, Calif. (AP)—The Los Angeles County coroner's office is investigating the deaths of twin sisters as possible suicides after their bodies were found in a Hawaiian Gardens home with that of their 87-year-old mother, who appears to have died of natural causes. Coroner's assistant chief Ed Winter said Tuesday autopsies on the elderly woman and her 58-year-old daughters are pending. He says the twins' deaths were believed to be possible suicides, and the mother's death the result of natural causes. The three were found Monday in a house where a car had been left running in the garage.

Oklahoma agency calls for wastewater cuts to stem quakes

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Oklahoma oil-and-gas regulators on Tuesday issued their most far-reaching directive yet in response to a surge in earthquakes by asking the operators of nearly 250 injection wells to reduce the amount of wastewater they inject underground by 40 percent. The Oklahoma Corporation Commission wants operators over the next two months to reduce injections by more than 500,000 barrels of wastewater daily in an area that covers more than 5,200 square miles of northwest Oklahoma. The commission's plan has been in the works since late October and was not influenced by a 5.1-magnitude quake that hit the area Saturday, said commission spokesman Matt Skinner. People reported feeling Saturday's quake, the third-strongest in state history, in as many as 13 other states, including in Georgia, 900 miles away. "Obviously the events of the weekend are clear (and) underscore the need to put a plan like this in place," Skinner said.

Asia

US stealth jets fly over S. Korea amid N. Korea standoff

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea (AP)—Four U.S. F-22 stealth fighters flew low over South Korea on Wednesday in a clear show of force against North Korea, a day after South Korea's president warned of the North's collapse amid a festering standoff over its nuclear and missile ambitions.

The high-tech planes capable of sneaking past radar undetected were seen by an Associated Press photographer before they landed at Osan Air Base near Seoul. They were escorted by other U.S. and South Korean fighter jets.

AP

U.S. F-22 stealth fighters fly over Osan Air Base in Pyeongtaek, South Korea, Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2016. Four

Pyongyang will likely view the arrival of the planes flown from a U.S. base in Japan as a threat as they are an apparent display of U.S. airpower aimed at showing what the United States can do to defend its ally South Korea from potential aggression from North Korea.

"The F-22 'Raptor' is the most capable air superiority fighter in the world, and it represents one of many capabilities available for the defense of this great nation," Lt. Gen. Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, deputy commander of the U.S. military command in South Korea, said in a statement.

"The U.S. maintains an ironclad commitment" to the defense of South Korea, he said.

The U.S. military would not say how long the F-22s will be deployed in South Korea.

The United States often sends powerful warplanes to South Korea in times of tension with North Korea. Last month it sent a nuclear-capable B-52 bomber to South Korea after North Korea defiantly conducted its fourth nuclear test.

China deploys missiles in disputed South China Sea: Taiwan

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Taiwan said Wednesday that China had positioned anti-aircraft missiles on a disputed South China Sea island claimed also by Taiwan and Vietnam and watched closely by Washington.

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense said in a statement it had "grasped that Communist China had deployed" an unspecified number of missiles on Woody Island in the Paracel group.

The move would follow China's efforts to build new islands in the disputed sea by piling sand atop reefs and then adding airstrips and military installations. The most dramatic work has taken place in the Spratly Island group, where the militaries of four nations have a presence, although similar work has also gone on at Woody and other Chinese holdings in the Paracels.

"The military will pay close attention to subsequent developments," the ministry's statement said. Relevant parties should "work together to maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea region to refrain from any unilateral measure that would increase tensions," the statement added.

U.S. network Fox News also said China had moved surface-to-air missiles to the Paracels, identifying them as two batteries of a system known as HQ-9, along with radar targeting arrays. The missiles have a range of about 200 kilometers (125 miles), making them a threat to all forms of civilian and military aircraft.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Chinese ship to leave Australia to search for Flight 370

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—The first Chinese ship to search for the Malaysian airliner that vanished almost two years ago is due to depart Australia on Thursday for the southern Indian Ocean equipped with state-of-the-art sonar, a search agency said Wednesday. The *Dong Hai Jiu 101* had been testing its Synthetic Aperture Sonar off the west Australian coast in recent days and will drop off personnel at the port of Fremantle before departing for the vast search area 1,800 kilometer (1,100 miles) to the southwest, the Australian Transport Safety Bureau said in a statement. The Chinese ship will become the fourth ship scouring a 120,000-square-kilometer (46,000-square-mile) expanse where Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 is thought to have crashed on March 8, 2014.

Palace says 88-year-old Thai king ailing with infection

BANGKOK (AP)—Thailand's royal palace says 88-year-old King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the world's longest-reigning monarch, is suffering from a 38.1 C (100.6 F) fever, fatigue, rapid breathing and occasional high blood pressure. The king has lived in a Bangkok hospital for much of the past six years, and Tuesday's health bulletin described the same general set of symptoms that he has been suffering for six months. The king has been a stabilizing figure through much of his reign, but his participation in public affairs has sharply declined in recent years.

Australian miner finds huge 404-carat diamond in Angola

SYDNEY (AP)—A massive, 404-carat diamond measuring more than 7 centimeters (2.7 inches) in length has been unearthed in the southern African nation of Angola, an Australian mining company said. The gem is the largest diamond ever discovered in Angola, the Perth-based Lucapa Diamond Company said in a statement to investors this week. The white diamond is worth an estimated 20 million Australian dollars ($14.2 million), Lucapa chairman Miles Kennedy told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. The diamond was found by the Lulo Diamond Project, a partnership between Lucapa, Endiama—Angola's national diamond company—and a private investor. The area the Lulo project has been mining has produced more than 60 large diamonds since the trio began exploring the region in 2015, Lucapa said.

World

IS faces budget crunch, cutting perks and trimming salaries

BEIRUT (AP)—Faced with a cash shortage in its so-called caliphate, the Islamic State group has slashed salaries across the region, asked Raqqa residents to pay utility bills in black market American dollars, and is now releasing detainees for a price of $500 a person.

The extremists who once bragged about minting their own currency are having a hard time meeting expenses, thanks to coalition airstrikes and other measures that have eroded millions from their finances since last fall. Having built up loyalty among militants with good salaries and honeymoon and baby bonuses, the group has stopped providing even the smaller perks: free energy drinks and Snickers bars.

Necessities are dwindling in its urban centers, leading to shortages and widespread inflation, according to exiles and those still suffering under its rule. Interviews gathered over several weeks included three exiles with networks of family and acquaintances still in the group's stronghold in Raqqa, residents in Mosul, and analysts who say IS is turning to alternative funding streams, including in Libya.

In Raqqa, the group's stronghold in Syria, salaries have been halved since December, electricity is rationed, and prices for basics are spiraling out of reach, according to people exiled from the city.

"Not just the militants. Any civil servant, from the courts to the schools, they cut their salary by 50 percent," said a Raqqa activist now living in the Turkish city of Gaziantep, who remains in close contact with his native city. But that apparently wasn't enough close the gap for a group that needs money to replace weapons lost in airstrikes and battles, and pays its fighters first and foremost. Those two expenses account for two-thirds of its budget, according to an estimate by Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, a researcher with the Middle East Forum who sources Islamic State documents,

Within the last two weeks, the extremist group started accepting only dollars for "tax" payments, water and electric bills, according to the Raqqa activist, who asked to be identified by his nom de guerre Abu Ahmad for his safety. "Everything is paid in dollars," he said. His account was bolstered by another ex-Raqqa resident, who, like Ahmad, also relies on communications with a network of family and acquaintances still in the city.

Al-Tamimi came across a directive announcing the fighters' salary cuts in Raqqa: "On account of the exceptional circumstances the Islamic State is facing, it has been decided to reduce the salaries that are paid to all mujahedeen by half, and it is not allowed for anyone to be exempted from this decision, whatever his position."

Those circumstances include the dramatic drop in global prices for oil—once a key source of income—airstrikes that have targeted cash stores and oil infrastructure, supply line cuts, and crucially, the Iraqi government's decision to stop paying civil servants in territory controlled by the extremists.

Turkey pushes case for ground operations as Kurds advance

BEIRUT (AP)—Turkey said Tuesday it is pressing for ground operations in Syria, hoping for the involvement of the U.S. and other allies as a force dominated by Kurdish fighters pushed through rebel lines and captured more territory near the Turkish border.

In Damascus, the U.N. envoy to Syria suggested that humanitarian aid would be allowed into several besieged areas Wednesday, calling it the "duty of the government of Syria."

"Tomorrow we test this," Staffan de Mistura said after meeting with Syria's foreign minister. The U.N. later announced the government of President Bashar Assad has approved access to seven such areas across the country and that convoys would head out in the coming days.

De Mistura has been trying to secure aid deliveries to improve the chances of restarting peace talks before the end of February. But those efforts have been clouded by the intense fighting north of Aleppo, where various forces backed by regional and international rivals are clashing over a crucial strip of land linking Syria's largest city to the border with Turkey.

Syrian government troops and allied militias, backed by heavy Russian bombardment, are closing in on the area, hoping to seal off parts of Aleppo held by rebels since 2012 in what would be a major blow to the opposition. Syria's state news agency SANA and opposition activists said government forces have seized two more villages.

U.S.-backed Kurdish forces, which had mainly battled the Islamic State group and remained largely neutral in the civil war, are advancing in the same region, fighting rebels and other insurgents opposed to Assad in a bid to expand a nearby enclave.

Pope to Mexican youth: Jesus doesn't want you to be hit men

MORELIA, Mexico (AP)—Pope Francis urged Mexico's young people to resist the lure of easy money from dealing drugs and instead value themselves during a visit Tuesday to the heartland of the nation's narcotics trade. "Jesus, who gives us hope, would never ask us to be hit men," he said.

Francis brought a message of hope to Mexico's next generation during a youth pep rally in Morelia, capital of Michoacan state, a major methamphetamine production hub and drug-trafficking route.

It was by far the most colorful event of his visit, featuring butterfly-winged dancers and mariachi bands—and a crowd so enthusiastic that Francis got pulled over by people grabbing at him.

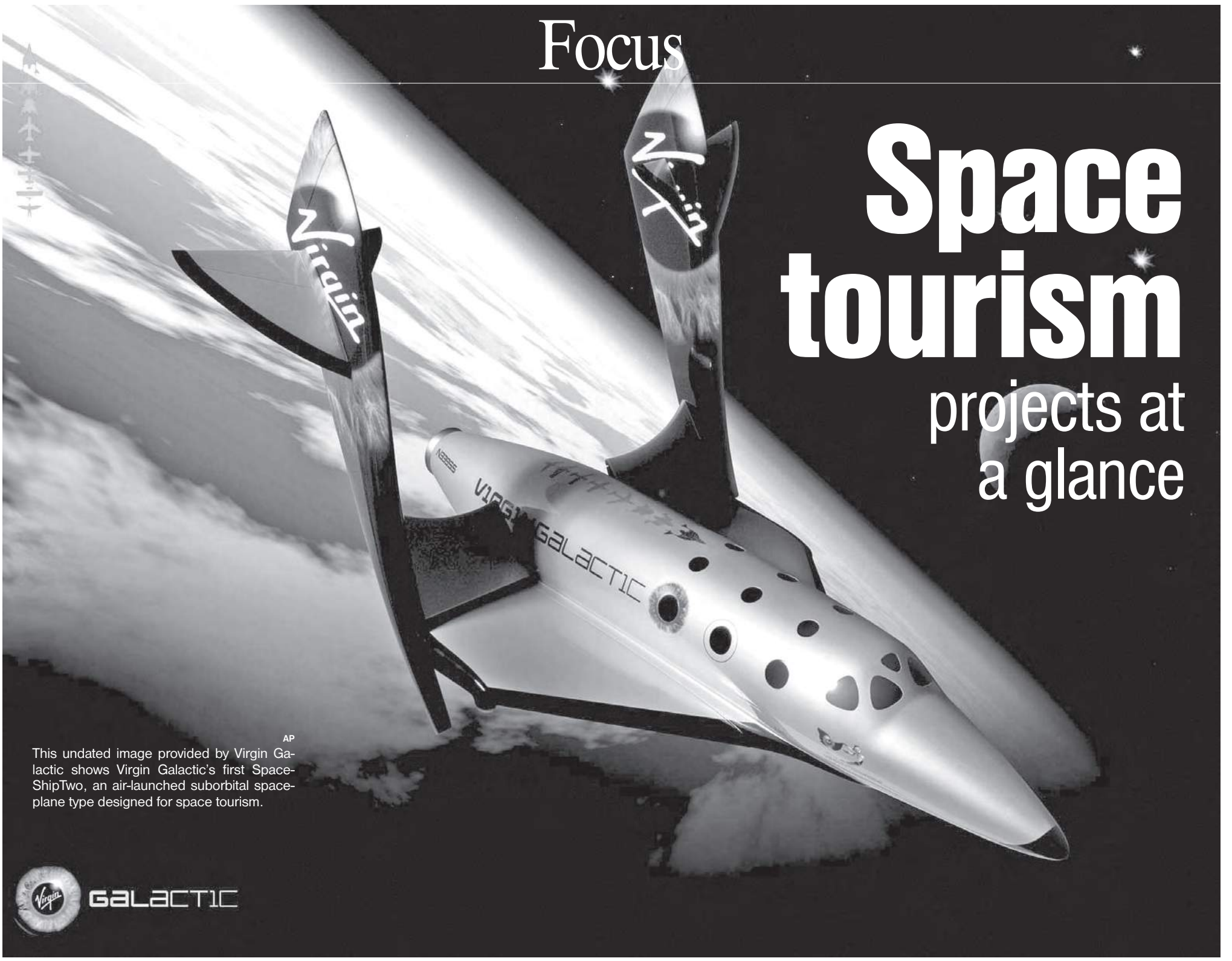
Improvising at times from his text, Francis told the crowd that he understood that for young Mexicans it was difficult to feel their worth "when you are continually exposed to the loss of friends or relatives at the hands of the drug trade, of drugs themselves, of criminal organizations that sow terror."

But, he insisted, by following Christ they would find the strength to say "it is a lie to believe that the only way to live, or to be young, is to entrust yourselves to drug dealers or others who do nothing but sow destruction and death."

Francis offered a similar appeal to Mexican priests and nuns during a Mass earlier in the day in a Morelia stadium. There, he told the country's clerics that they must fight injustice and not resign themselves to the drug-fueled violence and corruption around them.

Focus

Space tourism projects at a glance



AP
This undated image provided by Virgin Galactic shows Virgin Galactic's first SpaceShipTwo, an air-launched suborbital spaceplane type designed for space tourism.

By JOHN ANTCZAK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Virgin Galactic later this month in Mojave, California, is preparing to roll out its new SpaceShipTwo, a vehicle the company hopes will one day take tourists to the edge of space. It comes roughly 15Ω months since an earlier incarnation was destroyed in a test flight, killing one of the pilots. Despite the setback, the dream of sending tourists to the edge of space and beyond is still alive. Space tourism companies are employing designs including winged vehicles, vertical rockets with capsules and high-altitude balloons.

A look at projects currently under development:

VIRGIN GALACTIC

The most prominent space tourism program, the commercial space line founded by adventurer-business mogul Sir Richard Branson will use a winged rocket plane dubbed SpaceShipTwo, successor to SpaceShipOne, which in 2004 won the $10 million Ansari X Prize that was intended to spur the industry's development.

SpaceShipTwo is designed to be flown by two pilots and carry up to six passengers on a suborbital trajectory to altitudes above 62 miles (100 kilometers), an internationally recognized boundary of space.

Like early U.S. X-planes, Virgin Galactic's craft will be carried aloft by another aircraft, called WhiteKnightTwo, and released at about 50,000 feet before its rocket engine is ignited for a supersonic thrill ride to the fringes of space and a view of the Earth far below.

The space line says SpaceShipTwo's cabin is roomy enough for passengers to float during a few minutes of weightlessness before beginning an unpowered glide to a runway landing.

A key feature of the design is the so-called feathering system - a term derived from the feathers of a badminton projectile. Twin tails extending rearward from the tips of each wing rotate upward as a means to slow and stabilize SpaceShipTwo as it re-enters the atmosphere. The "feathers" then rotate back to their normal position for the rest of the glide and landing.

Virgin Galactic's first SpaceShipTwo was destroyed on Oct. 31, 2014, when a co-pilot prematurely unlocked the feathers during a powered test flight and aerodynamic forces broke the craft apart. The co-pilot was killed but the pilot parachuted to safety. The company will roll out its new SpaceShipTwo later this month in Mojave, California, but the timeline for testing and commercial operation has not been released.

Hundreds of people have put down deposits of $250,000 for a chance to fly into space with Virgin Galactic, which plans to operate from Spaceport America in New Mexico.

BLUE ORIGIN

Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin project is testing a vertical-takeoff rocket topped by a six-passenger capsule for suborbital hops.

Like Astronaut Alan Shepard's pioneering 1961 flight during Project Mercury, the capsule separates from the booster rocket and descends beneath parachutes without going into orbit around the Earth.

The unconventional twist is reusability.

Blue Origin recently conducted a test launch from Texas in which the rocket dubbed New Shepard performed a vertical landing, slowing its descent by relighting its engine as it fell back to Earth. In January, the company launched the same rocket and it again landed intact.

Blue Origin says that during flights passengers will experience a few minutes of weightlessness after the capsule separates from the booster. Passengers will be able to leave their seats and float about the capsule before a signal tells them to be reseated for landing.

The company has chosen Florida for its base of operations. Details of space tourism operations have not been released.

XCOR AEROSPACE

The company has spent years developing a rocket plane named Lynx that is intended to be capable of making multiple flights each day with a pilot and one passenger aboard.

Unlike Virgin Galactic's SpaceShipTwo, the Lynx will take off under its own power from a runway, climb toward space and then glide back to a runway landing. XCOR also plans flights surpassing an altitude of 62 miles.

In December, the company said it reached a milestone in development of the Lynx propulsion system by successfully using waste heat to drive essential engine parts, eliminating the need for large and heavy tanks of compressed gas.

XCOR, now headquartered in Midland, Texas, also reported progress late last year in completing structural components of its first Lynx as well as a flight simulator system for pilot training.

The company says it has more than 350 clients. The price of booking a seat rose from $100,000 to $150,000 on Jan. 1, but the company has not said when flights will begin.

"The fact is that we are in a process in which you just can't rush things," Lynx test pilot Harry van Hulten said in press release last fall.

WORLD VIEW

The Arizona company plans to loft passengers to altitudes above 100,000 feet in a capsule suspended below a "parawing" and a helium balloon.

The trip some 19 miles high would be to "near space" but would give a substantial view of the Earth far below while avoiding the stress of G forces endured during rocket flight.

Compared to flights on rocket-powered space tourism vehicles offering a few minutes at the top of a suborbital trajectory, World View envisions spending two hours at the maximum altitude, with amenities such as a lavatory.

The two-member crew then begins the landing process by venting helium until the capsule descends to 50,000 feet. The balloon is then released and the parawing allows the capsule to glide to a landing spot.

The company announced last month that it plans to conduct launches from Spaceport Tucson.

Environment

US moves to take thriving California foxes off ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

By LOUIS SAHAGUN
LOS ANGELES TIMES

MCT

A female Channel Islands Fox in a March 2004 file image, in Ventura, Calif. Marking the end of a remarkably successful recovery effort, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Friday, Nov. 12, 2016, proposed taking three subspecies of the fox off the endangered species list.

LOS ANGELES—Marking the end of a remarkably successful recovery effort, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on Friday proposed taking three subspecies of foxes native to California's Channel Islands off the endangered species list.

The San Miguel, Santa Rosa and Santa Cruz Island foxes were classified as endangered in 2004 after suffering catastrophic declines primarily because of predation by golden eagles.

The wildlife service is also proposing to move the designation of foxes on Santa Catalina Island from endangered to threatened. Populations of that fox—a subspecies found only on the 76-square-mile island about 22 miles off the mainland—fell to roughly 100 in 1999 because of a canine distemper epidemic. The island is now home to about 1,800 of the animals.

A decision on the proposals is expected within a year.

The Channel Islands foxes' comeback began in 2004, when the wildlife service partnered with the National Park Service, the Nature Conservancy and the Catalina Island Conservancy in relocating fox-eating golden eagles from the Channel Islands; bringing back bald eagles, which eat fish, not foxes; vaccinating against distemper; and breeding the cat-size carnivores in captivity.

Today, there are nearly as many island foxes scampering over the islands as there were hundreds of years ago, when the largest mammal on the Channel Islands—and the smallest fox in North America—flourished with no natural predators.

"The speed at which these subspecies have recovered points to the strength of the endangered species act in focusing conservation attention and catalyzing recovery actions, and demonstrates what we can achieve together," said Dan Ashe, director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The move to removed the foxes from the list followed a five-year status review, which was conducted by the wildlife service and took into account factors such as fluctuations in populations and continuing threats.

Each fox population on the Channel Islands "is now self-sustaining," Robert McMorran, a wildlife service biologist, said. He said on those islands, "there are now about 5,500 island foxes."

On Santa Catalina Island, the roughly 1,800 foxes surpasses the population of about 1,300 seen before the animals were decimated by the disease scientists believe was introduced by a mainland raccoon that arrived on a boat or barge.

On Catalina, a resort destination visited by 1 million people each year, however, the potential for a disease outbreak remains. As a result, the service recommends that the subspecies' status be moved from endangered to threatened.

The five-pound animals are gray with pointed noses, reddish ears and feet and black-tipped tails. They live about 10 years, pair for life and generally enjoy a carefree existence.

Managing the species on Catalina Island now includes trapping the foxes each year, inspecting them for illnesses, vaccinating them against distemper and rabies, outfitting them with telemetry and monitoring their behavior.

Biologists also watch for threats that could lead to unnatural deaths. Each year, several foxes drown in uncovered water containers, become trapped in trash cans, are injured or killed by unleashed dogs, hit by vehicles or die from the ingestion of rodenticides.

Thirsty continents are slowing down expected sea level rise, scientists say

By SEAN GREENE
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Despite the accelerated melting of glaciers and ice sheets, sea levels aren't rising quite as quickly as scientists anticipated. The reason: Continents are absorbing more of the water before it flows into the seas, according to a new study.

Scientists at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory figured this out by measuring changes in Earth's gravity with twin satellites orbiting the Earth in tandem. Over the past decade, thirsty continents have slowed the rate of sea level rise by about 20 percent, or about 1 millimeter per year, according to the study published in Science.

The force of gravity depends on mass: The more there is, the stronger the gravitational attraction. And on Earth, the only thing heavy enough and mobile enough to affect the planet's gravity is water, said John T. Reager, a JPL hydrologist and the study's lead author.

"That movement of water has one of the biggest effects on the earth's gravity field," Reager said.

Each year, Earth's continents cycle through 6 trillion tons of snow, surface water, soil moisture and groundwater. These stores of water are then gradually released into the ocean, allowing the process to begin again. But the strength of that cycle can vary from year to year and decade to decade, due to natural variability in the weather and climate.

Over the last century, however, the rate of sea level rise has accelerated as melting glaciers and ice sheets have poured more water into the ocean, and warming temperatures have caused the sea's volume to expand.

Between April 2002 and November 2014, the years that Reager and his colleagues studied, the sea level rose at an average rate of 2.9 millimeters per year—nearly double the average rate seen during the 20th century, according to estimates from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

That's fast, to be sure, but still not quite as fast as the scientists would have expected.

To solve this puzzle, the scientists considered a fourth factor: the water stored on land.

Using satellite data from NASA's Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) mission, they were able to measure the water cycle's influence on sea level for the first time.

GRACE uses a pair of satellites to track changes in Earth's gravity field. That allowed them to see where the water was and where it wasn't.

The twin satellites, called Tom and Jerry, constantly chase each other around the globe in an orbital game of cat-and-mouse. When Jerry flies near a massive object like a mountain, the tug of gravity will pull him toward it and the distance between him and Tom will grow.

As Jerry passes the mountain, the effect happens in reverse: The tug of the mountain's gravity pulls him back, allowing Tom to catch up.

Meanwhile, scientists on the ground measure the change in distance between the two satellites. Those changes in distance reveal how the strength of gravity has changed at different points on Earth's surface.

"In Southern California we can see the pull of gravity decreasing because of the drought," said Alex Gardner, a JPL glaciologist who worked on the study. "When there's a big flood event, we can see the pull of gravity increasing."

Between 2002 and 2014, natural climate and weather cycles brought more rain and snow over land, where it collected in the soils and caused water tables to rise, Reager said.

During this time, the continents soaked up an extra 3.2 trillion tons of water, slowing the rate of sea level rise by about 0.71 millimeters per year.

But the pattern won't continue indefinitely. Eventually, Gardner said, he expects the continents to start to lose water mass again.

"The land can only hold so much water," Gardner said. "The expectation is this additional soaking up of water is not going to last forever."

The only way to abate the rising seas is to reduce the amount of energy Earth absorbs, and the only way to do that is to stop emitting CO2 and other greenhouse gases, Gardner said.

"We can't compete with the Earth's system. It's just so huge," he said. "Some years are wet, some years are dry. You wait long enough and the climate wins. Climate always wins."

Life & Style

CJ the German shorthaired pointer wins Westminster dog show

NEW YORK (AP)—Now appointed America's top dog—CJ, the German shorthaired pointer.

CJ won best in show at the 140th Westminster Kennel Club on Tuesday night, beating a couple of top favorites at a nearly packed Madison Square Garden.

There was a moment of drama, too.

As judge Dr. Richard Meen from Canada began to announce his choice, German shepherd handler Kent Boyles took a step toward the prized silver bowl. He heard "German" and the "sh" to start the second word, but that was as far as he got.

The 3-year-old CJ bested 2,751 other entries in 199 breeds and varieties to win the nation's most prestigious dog competition.

"It's exactly like what I imagined," co-owner, breeder, and handler Valerie Nunes-Atkinson said.

CJ certainly came from championship stock. His grandmother, Carlee, was one of two previous German shorthaired pointers to win Westminster, taking the title in 2005.

"He's never done anything wrong," Nunes-Atkinson said.

A borzoi called Lucy finished second.

CJ also topped a Skye terrier, German shepherd, bulldog, shih tzu and Samoyed. There is no prize money for the win, but there are valuable breeding rights in the near future and a legacy in dogdom forever.

Charlie the Skye terrier finished second at Westminster last year to Miss P the beagle. Rumor the German shepherd was ranked as the No. 1 show dog in the country last year and had won 101 times.

"Vegas odds were not with us," Nunes-Atkinson said.

As Meen studied each of the final seven dogs, he held up his hands like a picture frame to focus on their expression.

CJ "took me back into the past for what they were bred to do," Meen said. "He floated around the ring beautifully."

The fan favorite earlier in the night was a large Leonberger, who wanted a treat and kept gnawing at his handler's suit pocket all the way around the ring.

This was the 18th overall best in show win for CJ, whose initials stand for his path from the West Coast—quite a California Journey, it was, from the city of Temecula.

Earlier in the day, Nunes-Atkinson explained what made CJ so special.

"He has that extra sparkle," she said. "He's an old soul."

Nunes-Atkinson became the first owner, breeder and handler to win Westminster since 1983.

CJ definitely has his rituals. Before romping around the ring, he usually bows down and sneezes.

After the victory, Nunes-Atkinson kept kissing the dog she calls "the Prince" while looking into his golden, winning eyes.

AP

C.J., a German shorthaired pointer, is shown in the ring during the sporting group competition at the 140th Westminster Kennel Club dog show, Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2016, at Madison Square Garden in New York. C.J. won best in Sporting group.

CJ won best of breed earlier in the day, then took the sporting group.

Meen, a psychiatrist, was asked whether he had ever treated dogs.

"No, they're perfect," he said. "People are a mess."

Also on display:

CATWALK TO DOGS WALK: This is Fashion Week in Manhattan, and the models are strutting less than a block from the Garden. But don't expect to see any of them venturing from the runway over to the ring.

Even though designer Valentino famously brings his pugs everywhere, most of the fashionistas are pretty busy. Instead, watch what the top handlers wear on the green carpet.

As a rule, the pooches are supposed to be the stars, so no glitzy couture or loosey-goosey garments.

Michelle Scott is among the very best; she's twice won best in show at Westminster.

"It has to be comfortable. It has to be professional. And I like bright colors," she said.

As for the models on the catwalk, would they be dressed for success with the dogs?

"Oh, they're all so beautiful," Scott said. "But those high heels and short, little outfits. I don't think that would work."

Most dog owners brought their own lucky clothes. From hats to sweaters to jewelry, there were many breeds and varieties of pooch apparel on parade around the rings.

Erik Schimmelfing of Raleigh, North Carolina, came to town with a T-shirt featuring a picture of a basset hound that covered his torso.

"This was the first article of clothing in my suitcase," he said.

UNO FLAP: Try to imagine Derek Jeter being ejected from Yankee Stadium on Old-Timers' Day. That's sort of what happened Monday night to Uno the beagle, widely acclaimed as the most popular winner in Westminster history.

CNBC wanted to show Uno in the opening segment of its telecast, and quietly brought the dog to the TV tower in the ring. But Uno wasn't registered to be in the building and Westminster officials didn't know he was there until they heard him barking.

Now almost 11, the 2008 winner and his handlers were escorted by security out of the Garden as "any undocumented dog would've been," Westminster President Sean McCarthy said.

A spokesman for NBC Sports said it was "a misunderstanding."

Cosby loses appeal; case appears headed to evidence hearing

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Bill Cosby's criminal sexual-assault case appears to be headed toward an evidence hearing after a judge denied his latest effort to throw the charges out.

In a ruling Tuesday, the judge who refused to dismiss the case earlier this month denied Cosby's appeal of that decision.

The 78-year-old TV star is accused of drugging and violating an ex-Temple University employee at his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004 and could get 10 years in prison if convicted. The defense insists Cosby had a promise from a previous district attorney that he would never be charged over the 2004 encounter.

Montgomery County Judge Steven O'Neill, though, found the evidence of such an agreement lacking after hearing from the ex-prosecutor and others at a two-day hearing. He said the issue doesn't warrant an immediate appeal that would delay the scheduled March 8 preliminary hearing.

"An immediate appeal from these orders would not materially advance the ultimate termination of the matter," the judge wrote in a brief order.

A spokesman for Cosby's lawyers said it was unclear if they would appeal to the state Superior Court.

Cosby's lawyers have argued that the charges stem from a political feud between former District Attorney Bruce L. Castor Jr., who had declined to arrest Cosby a decade ago, and Kevin Steele, who invoked the case as he campaigned against Castor last fall. Steele won the race for district attorney and filed charges against Cosby in December, days before the filing deadline expired.

Eagles of Death Metal perform in Paris for attack survivors

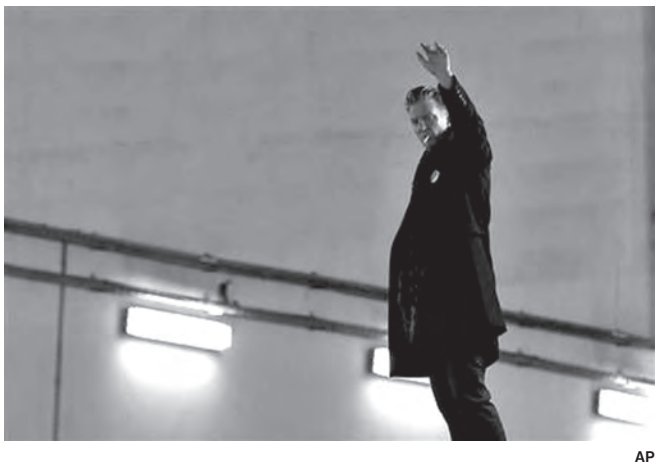
PARIS (AP)—The California rock band Eagles of Death Metal performed Tuesday at a highly charged Paris concert filled with fans who survived a terrifying massacre and siege at their last Paris show—and filled with memories of those who didn't.

"Bonsoir Paris, we're ready for this!" frontman Jesse Hughes told the crowd at the Olympia concert hall, before heading straight into the first song.

Later, between two songs, he shouted: "Peace, love and rock and roll!"

The band's performance Nov. 13 at the Bataclan concert hall turned into a bloodbath when Islamic extremist suicide bombers stormed in, as near-simultaneous attacks hit cafes and a stadium around Paris. Scores of concert-goers at the Bataclan were killed, while others hid or lay motionless for hours until a police raid ended the siege. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Armed police guarded entrances to the Olympia for Tuesday's performance, and concert-goers went through three bag and body searches before entering. Viewers seemed in good spirits ahead of the show, some drinking outside.



AP

Member of the band Eagles of Death Metal, Josh Homme waves to fans as he arrives ahead of his concert at the Olympia music hall, in Paris, Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2016.

One man wounded at the Bataclan appeared at Tuesday's concert in crutches. Others overcame deep fears or depression to attend.

"After the attacks ... I felt apprehension even being at the movies," said Bataclan survivor Florian Novac. After seeing the security at Tuesday's concert, however, he said, "Now I'm not afraid, I am confident."

The show saw one band member smash a guitar but was otherwise peaceful, and the crowds left uplifted.

One survivor, Alexis Lebrun, described himself as "very scared" ahead of the show.

He and other survivors opened up to a French terrorism commission ahead of Tuesday's concert, questioning how the French government failed to stop the attacks that claimed 130 lives, most of them at the Bataclan.

The violence came just 10 months after deadly jihadi attacks on a satirical newspaper and a kosher supermarket pushed the country into high alert, and forced French lawmakers to look for ways to further protect citizens.

Lebrun wondered why there was scant security around the Bataclan, one of Paris' biggest music venues, given the heightened alert in the city.

"No security measures were seen. No military or police presence in front of the hall. No particular searches at the hall entrance," Lebrun noted.

"How come the national security alert was at its highest level, yet there were no provisions to mobilize some guards in front of venues welcoming hundreds or thousands of people?" he asked.

Speaking to i-Tele television ahead of the concert, Eagles of Death Metal singer Hughes broke down sobbing.

"I don't know why God picked us to be the band."

Some came to Tuesday's concert in solidarity.

Concert-goer Virginie Todisco said that "it was a huge symbolic moment and it was just time to have some fun."

Actress' Instagram post draws attention of authorities

SEDONA, Ariz. (AP)—A heart carved into red rock is drawing the attention of authorities in Arizona who are investigating to see if actress Vanessa Hudgens is the culprit.

Hudgens posted a photo of the carving, bearing the names Vanessa and Austin, on her Instagram page Sunday but later removed it. Other photos with the hash tag "sedonadreams" still appeared on the site Tuesday.

The media brought the photo to the attention of the Coconino National Forest, which manages land around Sedona renowned for the towering red rocks, spokesman Brady Smith said. Authorities are investigating the incident, he said Tuesday.

A representative for Hudgens, 27, did not immediately respond to messages left by The Associated Press. Hudgens recently appeared on Fox's live production of "Grease." She's best known for her role as Gabriella Montez in the "High School Musical" television show and movie

Smith said he isn't sure whether law enforcement has located a heart that matches the one posted by Hudgens within the forest's 250 square-mile Red Rock Ranger District. Authorities will be researching social media posts and trying to contact any witnesses, he said.

AP

In this Sept. 5, 2012, file photo, actors Austin Butler, left, and Vanessa Hudgens arrive for the premiere of the movie "Spring Breakers: at the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy.

Rousey thought about killing herself after losing to Holm

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ronda Rousey says she had dark thoughts including suicide after she lost her bantamweight title to Holly Holm in Australia last year, her first defeat since joining UFC.

"Honestly, my thought in the medical room, I was sitting in the corner and was like, 'What am I anymore if I'm not this?'" Rousey said Tuesday during an appearance on "The Ellen DeGeneres Show." ''Literally sitting there thinking about killing myself. In that exact second, I'm like: 'I'm nothing. What do I do anymore?"

Rousey told DeGeneres that her relationship with UFC heavyweight Travis Browne helped get her through.

"I looked up and saw my man, Travis, was standing there," Rousey said. "I'm looking up at him and was just like: 'I need to have his babies. I need to stay alive.'"

AP

In this Sunday, Nov. 15, 2015 file photo, Ronda Rousey, left, and Holly Holm fight during their UFC 193 bantamweight title bout in Melbourne, Australia.

Rousey won her first 12 mixed martial arts fights—eight of them in less than a minute—before stepping into the cage against Holm in Melbourne last November. Holm finished her off with a devastating kick to the head.

Rousey told DeGeneres that she wants to be the one to beat Holm, who will make her first title defense against Miesha Tate in Las Vegas next month.

Singer, actress Denise Matthews, known as Vanity, dies

By JESSE J. HOLLAND
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Vanity, a Prince protege who renounced her sexy stage persona to become a Christian minister, has died. She was 57.

The singer and actress, born Denise Matthews, died Monday at a hospital in Fremont, California, said Gisela Hernandez, a spokeswoman for Washington Hospital Health Care System. Hernandez did not give a cause of death.

Matthews' sister Renay said the death was from complications over longstanding kidney issues.

She said Denise Matthews was happy in recent years. "She loved her time in the '80s, but I think she loved her recent time more, because she had been at peace," Renay Matthews said.

A native of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Matthews first rocketed to stardom through her association with Prince and the 80s girl group Vanity 6. During her time in music, Vanity released four albums with Motown and Warner Brothers and was known for her sultry appearance and sexually-themed music, including "Nasty Girl." She also appeared in films in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including "The Last Dragon," ''52 Pick-Up" and "Action Jackson."

Matthews' health took a turn for the worse in 1992 and she was hospitalized for kidney failure, which she blamed on cocaine and other drug use.

"I was sick inside. I was a crack cocaine addict and didn't even know how to wake up in the morning without some smoke," she said in an Associated Press story in 1999.

She renounced her Hollywood lifestyle and became a Christian minister. She married former Oakland Raider Anthony Smith in 1995 and they divorced the next year.

On a GoFundMe page aimed at helping her pay her medical bills, Matthews said four months ago she had gone through 23 surgeries and was on dialysis three times a week. She said she was also diagnosed with sclerosing encapsulating peritonitis, a rare benign cause of small bowel obstruction.

AP

In this March 22, 1985 file photo, actor Taimak, left, and Vanity arrive at the Century Plitt Theater for the premiere of their film "The Last Dragon," in Los Angeles. Vanity, a Prince protege who renounced her sexy stage persona to become a Christian minister,

Parents still worry about kids even after they've grown up

DEAR ABBY: At least "Renee in Oregon" (Sept. 10), who asked her adult daughters for their friends' phone numbers, cares enough to want someone to call if her adult children don't respond. I didn't regard her request as nosy or overbearing, simply so she'd have a "just in case" number. Renee's daughters sound like ungrateful brats who don't care anything about worrying their parents.

I'm thankful my four adult children will text me in response to my call to let me know they are OK. I have never had a problem getting a contact number from them for a neighbor or friend. Two of them offered the information without my asking.

I have only had to call a contact once. Thank goodness it was only a matter of a stolen phone, not a sick or injured child. I'm blessed my kids understand that it's not to get in their business, but a logical safety issue.

LUCKY DAD IN KENTUCKY

DEAR LUCKY DAD: I'm glad for you. The response from readers about Renee's letter was varied, and it was informative to read their perspectives:

DEAR ABBY: Thanks for your answer to Renee. It validated my whole life as a daughter of a domineering mother.

She is 92. I'm 62 and live 40 miles from her. I have a full-time job, take care of a small farm and still, after my weekly visit, have to call her to let her know I got home OK.

She also asks for my friends' phone numbers. I give her inaccurate ones so she can't pester them. My office knows to not put her calls through. I have asked her to call my cell, leave a message and I'll call her back when I am on break.

When I was younger, if she couldn't reach me by phone, she would call the police and the ERs, send my poor father to my house to look for me, or call my veterinarian to have him make a farm call—just to be sure I hadn't been ax-murdered.

The negative effect this has had on our relationship is profound. I have tried repeatedly to explain it to her, but she has never "gotten it," so I have created barriers in order to maintain boundaries. She has a number she can call for her in-home care providers, so if her need is real, she can get help—and there's always 911. I refuse to exist just for her to engulf.

PURPOSELY CHILDLESS IN MISSOURI

DEAR ABBY: Sometimes parents do need a contact person for emergencies. At what point should a person have to contact the police?

Years ago, parents here in Northern California didn't hear from their adult son for a week or two. They thought he was with his live-in girlfriend. She thought he had gone to see them. Sadly, his body was found stuffed in an irrigation pipe weeks later. He had been robbed and murdered.

Hopefully, Renee's three daughters are close enough to have regular contact with each other and can call their parents on a regular timetable to check in and assure them all is well.

CALIFORNIA MOM

DEAR ABBY: Telling Renee she was the reason her daughters moved so far away and don't answer her calls was unnecessarily hurtful. You have no idea why her daughters are so distant.

A better option would have been to suggest she approach her kids because she is concerned as their mother and they live so far from her. Rather than a list of their friends, she should ask each of them if there's someone close to them she might use as an emergency contact.

ANGIE IN MICHIGAN

DEAR ABBY: I have two daughters. If I asked them for this information, they wouldn't hesitate to hand it over. I think that's because my approach with my girls has always been, the more I stay out of their lives, the more they tell me. I empathize with Renee and sincerely hope she learns to back off. -- NO PROBLEMS HERE

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

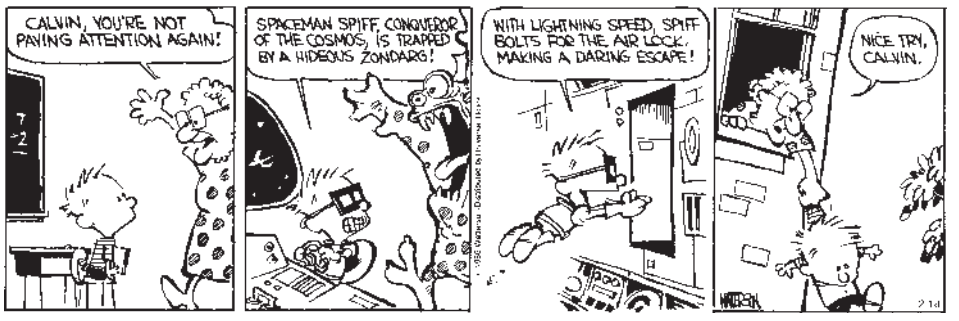
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

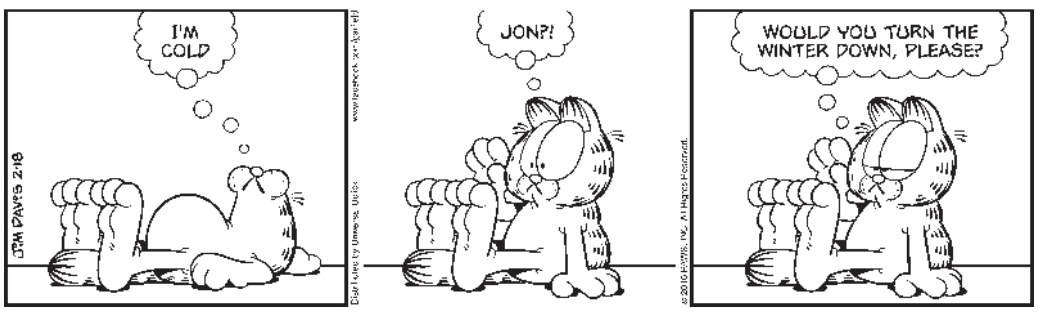
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


CALVIN, YOU'RE NOT PAYING ATTENTION AGAIN!
SPACEMAN SPIFF, CONQUEROR OF THE COSMOS, IS TRAPPED BY A HIDEOUS ZONDARG!
WITH LIGHTNING SPEED, SPIFF BOLTS FOR THE AIR LOCK, MAKING A DARING ESCAPE!
NICE TRY, CALVIN.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

KATY THINKS I SHOULD CHANGE MY MAIN CHARACTER TO A MONKEY.
WHAT? IN YOUR NOVEL?
IT'S NOT A HORRIBLE IDEA. LOOK AT "WATERSHIP DOWN". IT COULD BE INTERESTING.
HIS WHOLE BANANA OBSESSION WOULD MAKE A LOT MORE SENSE.
THAT DID SEEM KIND OF WEIRD.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Towering
5 Firewood unit
8 Related
12 Inter —
13 Debtor's letters
14 Sci-fi prefix
15 Overly theatrical
16 Male cat
17 Basin accessory
18 Walk very quietly
20 Target at a fiesta
22 Bruins legend
23 — Tech
24 Speech problem
27 Relaxing time at Aspen
32 Noah's craft
33 Dead heat
34 Tool set
35 Easily startled
38 Verdi opera
39 Grand-—, N.S.
40 Listener
42 Inventor's insurance
45 Top rooms
49 Unsigned (Abbr.)
50 Rowing need
52 Mythic man-goat
53 Lascivious
54 Boom times
55 Wrinkly fruit
56 Has
57 Golf prop
58 Politico Trent —

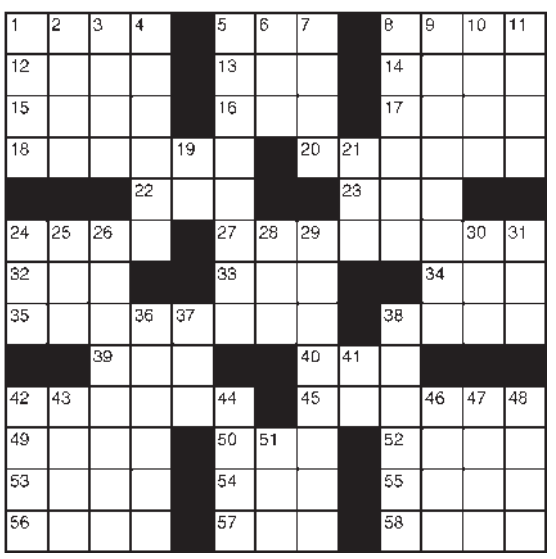
DOWN

1 Diplomacy
2 Jai —
3 Walk unevenly
4 Portable PC
5 Well-read folks
6 Tic-tac-toe win
7 Movie Forrest
8 Sports venues
9 "A Streetcar Named Desire" surname
10 "Yeah, right"
11 Mrs. Nick Charles
19 Choice word?
21 Frozen water
24 Vegas lead-in
25 Annoy
26 Avoid arrest, perhaps
28 Math ratios
29 Practice for a play
30 Josh
31 Call — day (quit)
36 Pollster's finds
37 Sawbuck
38 Clever
41 @
42 — Alto, Calif.
43 From the start
44 Track tipster
46 Shakespearean villain
47 Zealous group
48 Peevish fit
51 Gorilla

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	T	O	A	■	J	A	W	■	C	D	A	M
T	A	R	T	■	A	N	O	■	V	I	B	E
C	R	A	T	O	R	I	C	■	I	C	E	S
P	O	■	I	O	■	■	S	P	■	A	S	H
■	■	■	■	C	H	A	T	■	E	S	P	■
M	E	S	A	■	M	O	O	D	■	R	A	M
A	R	C	■	A	M	A	T	I	■	I	T	O
W	E	E	■	C	O	S	I	■	T	O	M	B
■	■	N	I	L	■	T	S	A	R	■	■	■
U	R	A	N	U	S	■	■	C	I	D	E	R
Z	O	R	A	■	L	O	T	H	A	R	I	O
I	■	I	N	■	A	R	A	■	■	A	R	A
S	H	O	E	■	G	E	M	■	S	T	E	M

Yesterday's answer 2-18



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Shane Lyons, 28; Molly Ringwald, 48; John Travolta, 62; Yoko Ono, 83.

Happy Birthday: Good things will come your way if you are patient and let your intuition lead the way. Don't be afraid to be different or to share your vision with others. Think outside the box and use your wit and charm to attract positive attention and get the help you need to follow through with your plans. Love others unconditionally and be accepting and kind. Your numbers are 5, 17, 21, 24, 31, 38, 42.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Work alone if that's what it takes to get things done your way. Don't wait around for help—do what you want to do quickly and efficiently to avoid being questioned. Keep a secret to avoid opposition or interference. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Try to get along with your peers to avoid a problem at work. Refrain from making personal changes to the way you look or what you believe in. Wait until you are certain about what you want to do before taking action. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Check out new job opportunities. Consider how your skills and talents can fit into the current economic trends and market yourself accordingly. Showing affection and charm will win favors from someone you love. Travel plans should be made. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Revisit the past and document the things you want to remember. Make a change at home that will give you more space or result in more people or pets living with you. Don't be afraid to do things differently. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You could use a change. Whether you decide to go on sabbatical or just a short vacation, it will do you good. You need time to yourself in order to make a wise choice about your future prospects. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Get out and have some fun. Take part in events that you are interested in and make a difference. Good fortune will arise through the people you meet. Express your emotions and take positive action. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Make plans. This is not the time to sit around waiting for people and things to come to you. Use your charm and intelligence to get ahead. Network and you will make an impression that will lead to greater confidence and better partnerships. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Travel, attend an exhibit or sign up for a self-awareness course, and you will meet unusual people and discover alternative ways to put your talents to good use. Don't miss out because someone is unwilling to take part. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Make a choice not to overspend or indulge. Put your money in a safe place and refuse to let anyone talk you into doing something foolish. Romance is highlighted, but shouldn't put you in debt. You can't buy love. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Do whatever it takes to impress someone who can help you change your financial or legal status. A little extra thought regarding how you can be more entertaining will help you attract promising job offers. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Take a break in order to figure out how you want to move forward. Life changes have sent you into a tailspin, and taking time to assess, regroup and make wise choices will be in your best interest. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You'll be forced to reevaluate your past and present in order to build a brighter future. Don't be afraid to start over. New beginning may be difficult, but can also be rejuvenating. Clear the way to freedom and good fortune. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are spontaneous, empathetic and mindful. You are persuasive and caring.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			2					
4		5		7		8		3
	9						1	
			3		8			5
	6						9	
7			5		1			
	8						7	
9		7		4		2		1
					9			

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	3	9	2	5	8	6	7	1
1	6	5	4	3	7	8	9	2
7	8	2	6	1	9	4	5	3
3	2	7	8	6	4	5	1	9
8	9	4	1	2	5	3	6	7
5	1	6	9	7	3	2	4	8
6	7	3	5	8	1	9	2	4
9	5	8	7	4	2	1	3	6
2	4	1	3	9	6	7	8	5

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/15

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

BEER BRANDS Solution: 6 letters

F	R	M	S	C	C	A	R	L	S	B	E	R	G	Ⓢ
O	A	E	I	A	C	A	S	T	E	L	L	O	Ⓔ	R
U	S	T	G	L	L	W	V	I	D	A	L	Ⓕ	E	O
N	L	E	T	R	L	V	H	R	G	I	Ⓔ	D	G	O
D	E	E	D	I	U	E	A	E	G	D	D	N	H	C
E	E	K	V	I	R	B	R	H	A	O	A	C	N	O
R	S	N	E	U	T	E	T	E	G	T	S	O	A	R
S	E	I	N	N	D	S	H	I	E	U	S	R	I	E
I	N	R	G	H	I	H	P	C	B	L	R	A	D	S
U	E	D	O	N	S	E	A	O	O	A	E	T	A	I
Q	G	O	G	I	I	T	H	M	L	B	W	S	N	E
E	K	T	F	C	E	L	T	I	A	A	E	E	A	W
S	A	G	I	D	O	S	R	O	B	T	R	N	C	D
O	O	M	O	O	R	T	G	A	T	T	B	O	A	U
D	I	M	A	R	Y	P	M	I	C	H	E	L	O	B

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Pistons acquire Harris from Magic for Jennings, Ilyasova

AP
Pistons acquired forward Tobias Harris, left, from Orlando on Tuesday in a deal that sent guard Brandon Jennings and forward Ersan Ilyasova to the Magic.

DETROIT (AP)—With a playoff spot within reach this year, the Detroit Pistons made a trade they hope will benefit them both now and in the future.

The Pistons acquired forward Tobias Harris from Orlando on Tuesday in a deal that sent guard Brandon Jennings and forward Ersan Ilyasova to the Magic. The 23-year-old Harris gives Detroit another athletic young player, and he'll be under team control for a while. Harris signed a $64 million, four-year deal to stay with the Magic last summer, when he was a restricted free agent.

"This is a move that can be looked at as a long-term move, as one that will fit with our core group of players, and we'll be able to keep them together," Detroit general manager Jeff Bower said.

Detroit, which is a half-game out of the final playoff spot in the Eastern Conference, gave up its starting power forward in Ilyasova. Jennings was the Pistons' backup point guard, and they could afford to part with him after making a long-term commitment to starter Reggie Jackson.

Detroit hasn't made the postseason since 2009. Bower said the Pistons were interested in Harris when he was a free agent, but his restricted status made acquiring him hard.

The 6-foot-9 Harris is averaging 13.7 points per game this season, down from 17.1 in 2014-15. His 3-point accuracy is down to 31 percent after he shot a career-high 36 percent a season ago.

Harris thanked the city of Orlando, coach Scott Skiles and his teammates in a post on Instagram.

"God closes one door to open up another," the post said. "Though this is not the easiest time it's part of life and part of the business of being a professional."

The Magic are also hoping to make a push for the playoffs, but they have lost 16 of 20 and are now in 11th place in the East.

"We felt like we needed to shuffle the deck a little bit. We needed to try to shake things up, not a ton, but we felt like the roster needed to be balanced in certain ways," Orlando GM Rob Hennigan said. "I don't think it's been a secret that we've been looking for more veteran stability on the roster."

The 28-year-old Ilyasova is averaging 11.3 points. The Pistons acquired him last offseason in a trade with Milwaukee. Jennings is averaging 6.8 points in 18.1 minutes a game. He returned in late December from an Achilles tendon injury that kept him out 11 months.

Jennings is in the last year of his contract. He now joins an Orlando team that has been going with second-year man Elfrid Payton at point guard.

"He was playing the best ball of his career probably, the month prior to getting injured," Bower said. "His long-term outlook was probably one that he was going to examine other situations that would probably offer him a different role for the future. So those are all real parts of the decision."

In Memphis, the Grizzlies are sending swingman Courtney Lee to the Charlotte Hornets in exchange for P.J. Hairston. The Grizzlies will also receive Chris Andersen from the Miami Heat, who will get guard Brian Roberts from Charlotte in the three-team deal.

The three teams confirmed the trade Tuesday night.

The addition of Lee will help bolster the Hornets' perimeter shooting and defense after losing Michael Kidd-Gilchrist for the season to a shoulder injury.

The Grizzlies get a look at Hairston, the second-year forward from North Carolina, and add a big man in Andersen to help frontcourt depth after losing Marc Gasol to injury.

Popovich 'the model of consistency' for NBA coaches

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—A San Antonio shootaround practice is winding down in silence, except for the occasional sound of a dribble or the whooshing noise that accompanies the ball going through the net. Players are lined up along the sides of the foul lane, watching teammates take two free throws before moving on in orderly fashion.

It's very orderly, no half-court shooting contests or wasting energy.

And it's a microcosm of how the Spurs do business—simply and effectively.

"You try to do things that are logical," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said. "It's sort of what works for us."

In a league that isn't shy about showing off glitz and glamour, the Spurs just show up, do their job and usually go home with the win. And the team wearing San Antonio's silver and black this season perhaps is the franchise's best yet under Popovich, no small statement considering that he's already won five NBA championships with the Spurs.

At 45-8 so far, there's no doubt that this year's team is good enough to give him hope of winning ring No. 6.

"All the guys love him," said Spurs All-Star forward LaMarcus Aldridge, the prize of last summer's free-agent class. "They understand that he thinks differently, outside the box. And they understand that he's very strict. But he's a winner, and they love him."

Around the league, there's no coach who commands the respect—from players and coaches—than Popovich, who can speak eloquently on any number of topics but almost steadfastly refuses to reveal the secrets of his basketball success.

Maybe that's part of his genius.

Or maybe, as Spurs forward David West suggests, there are no secrets to share after all. When West first joined the Spurs over the summer as a free agent, his initial order of business was to find that mystical something that obviously exists and separates Popovich from other coaches.

His quest turned up nothing.

"There's no big mystery or anything like that," West said. "It's just the way that they do things. Find a formula that works, and stick with it."

Such is what Popovich has done for two decades and counting in San Antonio, where the Spurs are quietly putting together a most historic season. They're on pace for the third-best regular season record in NBA history -- but as of now that would only merit the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference because of defending champion Golden State's dazzling 48-4 start.

Popovich is great at winning, and one of Cleveland star LeBron James' favorite memories is how on a night in 2013 when Popovich was equally good at losing. The Spurs lost to James and the Miami Heat in Game 7 of the NBA Finals that season, and Popovich remained on the floor for a few minutes to congratulate the newly crowned champions.

"There's just so much respect," James said. "Myself and Pop will always have a connection. I've faced them three times in The Finals. I've admired what he's been able to do with that franchise for so long, the constant staples of their franchise being Tim Duncan and himself. So it's always been a great treat to kind of watch him from afar."

At the All-Star Game, players watched Popovich up close in his role as Western Conference coach. He was playful—"be a leader," he yelled at reigning NBA MVP Stephen Curry of Golden State in one drill—and reflective, clearly enjoying spending time with the players that he'll spend the rest of the season trying to beat.

He even tried guarding Kobe Bryant 1-on-1, with a predictable outcome.

"That was awesome," Bryant said.

The Spurs go to the playoffs for the 19th consecutive year, win at least 50 games for the 17th straight year (the last time they didn't win 50 the league only played a 50-game schedule), and are 28-0 at home. And here's one of the things that make them different: They legitimately love being overshadowed by the Warriors.

Bosh resumes taking blood thinners

MIAMI (AP)—Chris Bosh is back on blood thinners to treat a clot that formed in his leg, the second straight year the Miami Heat forward has dealt with such a situation over the All-Star break.

Bosh began the medication regimen in recent days after the clot was diagnosed and has hopes that he can continue playing at some point this season, a person with knowledge of the situation told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Bosh has told the team that he will spend at least a few more days reviewing options and collecting information, said the person who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because neither the Heat nor the All-Star forward have yet to publicly reveal details of Bosh's condition.

"I hate it for him," said NASCAR driver Brian Vickers, who has also dealt with clotting issues that have impacted his career. "I would tell him the same thing again, just don't give up. Just keep fighting. Find a solution and keep going."

Athletes in contact sports are typically discouraged from playing while taking blood-thinning medication, because of the additional risk of bleeding and other issues.

A year ago at this time, the clot had traveled from Bosh's leg to his lung and he had a wave of other problems—including fluid in his lungs. It took about two months to properly diagnose last year's blood clot problem, with Bosh originally thinking it was a rib or back issue that was causing him such searing pain. This time, the diagnosis apparently came far quicker.

"I would not say he has to be excluded from sports because he's had a second (clot) event," said Robert Myerburg, a cardiologist and a professor of medicine at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

But if Bosh is considering playing while taking a lower dose of blood-thinners—which could be one of many options on his table right now—Myerburg would advise otherwise.

Tigers eyeing return to contention after spending big

DETROIT (AP)—After their four-year streak of AL Central titles ended with a last-place showing in 2015, the Detroit Tigers were facing the prospect of an extended decline, with several of their top players showing signs of age.

So the Tigers went out and did perhaps the only thing they could to bring themselves back into contention: They spent tens of millions of dollars to bring two of the top free agents on the market to Detroit.

Jordan Zimmermann and Justin Upton will be playing in Motown this year. Zimmermann signed a $110 million, five-year contract, and then Upton signed a $132.75 million, six-year deal. Now Detroit has even more star power to go along with Miguel Cabrera, Justin Verlander and Victor Martinez.

"Right now, we feel that from a defensive perspective, and pitching and hitting, we're pretty well rounded," general manager Al Avila said.

Last year's disappointing season included deadline deals in which the Tigers traded David Price, Yoenis Cespedes and Joakim Soria, but this offseason signals that ownership and the front office remain committed to trying to win a championship with this core of players. Cabrera, Martinez and Verlander all dealt with injuries last season, and all three of them are in their 30s, but Detroit is hopeful that the trio can still be very productive for at least the short-term future.

With Upton, Zimmermann, new closer Francisco Rodriguez and slugger J.D. Martinez in the fold, the Tigers will try to turn their 74-win season from 2015 into an aberration. Detroit will need a significant improvement in a division that includes World Series champion Kansas City and potential contenders in Cleveland, Minnesota and Chicago.

AP
Detroit Tigers Justin Verlander trades high-fives with his teammates in this undated file photo.

Here are a few things to watch when the Tigers take the field for spring training:

FIFTH STARTER

With Zimmermann, Verlander, Anibal Sanchez and free-agent acquisition Mike Pelfrey set in the rotation, that leaves one spot left. Daniel Norris, who came to Detroit when the Tigers traded Price last season, will have a chance to become the fifth starter after being treated in the offseason for a cancerous growth on his thyroid. Shane Greene, who struggled badly while in the rotation last year, is hoping to bounce back after surgery to repair a weakened blood vessel in his right shoulder.

MAYBIN'S ROLE

Cameron Maybin was traded from Atlanta to the Tigers in November, but now that Detroit has Upton as well, there's a bit of a logjam in the outfield. With Upton in left and J.D. Martinez in right, Maybin and Anthony Gose may be left to split time in center.

HEALTH

Detroit entered spring training last season with Cabrera and Victor Martinez recovering from offseason operations, and Verlander ended up missing the first couple months of the regular season. The Tigers' health looks much better heading into this season, but with so many key players in their 30s, that could always change.

BULLPEN

Detroit gave its bullpen a much-needed overhaul this offseason, trading for closer Francisco Rodriguez and acquiring Mark Lowe and Justin Wilson as well. It will be interesting to watch hard-throwing right-hander Bruce Rondon as he tries to work his way into the mix after being sent home late last season amid concerns about his effort level.

BEHIND THE PLATE

With Alex Avila no longer on the team, 25-year-old James McCann is now Detroit's clear No. 1 catcher. Switch-hitting backup Jarrod Saltalamacchia could also play an important role on a team without many productive hitters who can bat left-handed.

McIlroy and Fowler set for primetime match

NEW YORK (AP)—For the first time in more than a decade, golf is getting another prime-time exhibition. Except this one will be live - under the lights.

Quicken Loans is finalizing details for a match involving Rory McIlroy and Rickie Fowler a week before the U.S Open, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Monday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the match has not been announced.

The match would be at Detroit Golf Club on June 7, the Tuesday before U.S. Open week begins at Oakmont outside of Pittsburgh.

The first two hours would be televised live by Golf Channel, followed by the 9-11 p.m. slot shown live on CBS. It was not clear how many holes would be broadcast under the lights.

Unlike the Monday night matches involving Tiger Woods in 1999 and 2000, there would be a celebrity component with this exhibition. The person said it would be "Team Rory" against "Team Rickie."

Still to be determined are the celebrities and the format.

Quicken Loans, the Detroit-based mortgage company, is no stranger to offbeat sporting challenges. It already has staged the first college basketball game on an active aircraft carrier, and two years ago offered $1 billion to anyone who completed a perfect bracket in the NCAA college basketball bracket.

In golf, it became title sponsor of the Quicken Loans National, hosted by Woods, in 2014 and has a personal endorsement deal with Fowler. As part of its PGA Tour involvement, Quicken Loans has a sweepstakes in which it pays someone's mortgage for a year when a PGA Tour player makes a hole-in-one.

McIlroy, who is No. 3 in the world going into the Northern Trust Open this week at Riviera, and Fowler (No. 4 in the world) are two of the most popular figures in golf.

Both live in South Florida, and Fowler last year played in the Irish Open to help out McIlroy because of McIlroy's involvement.

Golf has a heritage of such exhibitions. A century ago, the value of winning a major was to be selected to compete in such exhibitions, where the prize money was greater than anything won at a major.

Woods resurrected that concept in 1999 with the "Showdown at Sherwood" against David Duval (they were No. 1 and No. 2 in the world at the time), and a year later against Sergio Garcia.

Those Monday night exhibitions got away from head-to-head matches and switched to team events that included women and seniors. They stopped in 2005.

Steelers likely not going to splurge in free agency

PITTSBURGH (AP)—The Pittsburgh Steelers have money to spend heading into free agency and there are roster needs aplenty with nearly two dozen players set to hit the open market.

Just don't expect general manager Kevin Colbert to start tossing around mega contracts to virtual strangers.

That's just not how the Steelers go about their business.

"We want to stay the course as best we can," Colbert said on Tuesday. "If there's a guy from the outside that makes sense, we'll plug him in."

Fresh off an 11-7 season in which Pittsburgh came close to beating the Super Bowl champion Denver Broncos, Colbert remains bullish on his club's talented core even with significant holes to fill, particularly in the secondary and along the offensive line.

The Steelers finished with the AFC's best offense despite playing the majority of the season without All-Pro center Maurkice Pouncey, star running back Le'Veon Bell and left tackle Kelvin Beachum. The defense produced sacks and turnovers at its highest rate in six years, but also ended up 30th in the league against the pass.

Colbert sees the 2016 draft as deep, particularly in the secondary. Pittsburgh has the 25th overall pick and six selections total, with the possibility of adding a compensatory selection in one of the later rounds.

In a way, Colbert figures the Steelers already have one of their 2016 picks on the roster. Last year's second-round pick, cornerback Senquez Golson, arrived at training camp and didn't play a snap all season.

Golson will be healthy heading into organized team activities and Pittsburgh needs him to be ready to play as it figures out which defensive backs it wants to re-sign.

Cornerbacks Antwon Blake and Brandon Boykin and safety Will Allen will all become free agents next month. Colbert didn't rule out making a run at keeping any or all of them and isn't closing the door on Cortez Allen either.

Allen has three years left on the $25 million deal he started on the eve of the 2014 season opener, but has struggled with inconsistency and injuries from the moment the ink was dry on the contract.

The Steelers could find some additional cap relief if they designated Allen for a June release, but Colbert didn't rule out keeping Allen around.

"We haven't written off any of those guys," Colbert said. "But we want to add to it as well."

Something Pittsburgh did in 2014 when it landed hard-hitting safety Mike Mitchell. Colbert opted against blaming most of Pittsburgh's defensive issues on the back end, calling it a collective effort.

Still, he liked what he saw from young linebackers Ryan Shazier, Bud Dupree and Jarvis Jones. All three will be asked to take another step forward next fall.

"The young guys have to continue to improve," Colbert said. "The progression has to out-pace the regression of the older guys."

In Denver, the Broncos have hired Klint Kubiak as an offensive assistant who will work with the team's quarterbacks.

The eldest son of head coach Gary Kubiak replaces Brian Callahan, who joined the Detroit Lions as their quarterbacks coach.

Klint Kubiak has five years of coaching experience following his four-year playing career at Colorado State, where he was a team captain and played in the East-West Shrine Game. He took part in rookie camp with the Washington Redskins in 2010 as a safety.

Klint Kubiak spent 2015 as wide receivers coach at the University of Kansas after serving as a quality control/assistant wide receivers coach for the Minnesota Vikings from 2013-14. He also spent two seasons on the coaching staff at Texas A&M.

Some other things Pittsburgh's front office is focused on before it meets with prospects at the combine next week.

PSG beats Chelsea in Champions League

AP

PSG's David Luiz, top, falls over Chelsea's Diego Costa during the Champions League round of 16, 1st leg soccer match between Paris Saint Germain and Chelsea at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris, France, Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2016.

PARIS (AP)—Struggling striker Edinson Cavani came off the bench to score the winner as Paris Saint-Germain beat Chelsea 2-1 in a pulsating first leg in the last 16 of the Champions League on Tuesday.

Cavani, who has lost his place in the side in recent weeks, latched onto a superb pass over Chelsea's stretched defense from winger Angel Di Maria and slotted through the legs of goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois from a narrow angle in the 78th minute.

"I'm happy for Eddy. I've said it often, because people doubt his scoring abilities, but he's always shown he can score goals," PSG coach Laurent Blanc said. "He was going through a very difficult period and I hope that scoring this goal gives him his confidence back."

Zlatan Ibrahimovic put PSG ahead with a powerful free-kick in the 39th minute, only for Chelsea to level on the stroke of halftime with a rare goal from midfielder John Obi Mikel.

Courtois made a string of saves to keep Chelsea in contention heading into the second leg, and Spanish winger Pedro almost spoiled the home celebrations in injury time with a rasping drive into the side netting.

"This is a very strong PSG, so I think the performance of our players was very good," Chelsea coach Guus Hiddink said. "But we could have been more lethal in the four or five counters that we made."

PSG is unbeaten in domestic competition since March and in all competitions since a 1-0 reverse away to Real Madrid in the group stage on Nov. 3—a run of 23 games.

Still, Blanc's side could regret a host of missed chances and Chelsea will fancy its chances at Stamford Bridge in three weeks' time.

"It's up to us to go and score at Stamford Bridge, we will get chances and we must take them," Blanc said.

In the night's other match, Benfica beat Zenit St. Petersburg 1-0 in Lisbon thanks to an injury-time goal from Brazilian striker Jonas.

Chelsea knocked out PSG in the quarterfinals two years ago and PSG won when they met at the same stage last season - with both ties settled on away goals.

PSG's preparations for the match were rocked by a scandal involving right back Serge Aurier, who was suspended by the club for insulting Blanc and some teammates in an expletive-filled online video.

But Blanc's side came out with plenty of energy, with midfielder Marco Verratti forcing a save from Courtois and Brazilian winger Lucas shooting wide.

Chelsea's makeshift defense—missing injured center-halves John Terry and Kurt Zouma—was often caught in two minds, whether to sit back or push up on their opponents.

Thankfully for the visitors, left back Cesar Azpilicueta cut out Di Maria's defense-splitting pass to Lucas as he was breaking into the area.

But the visitors almost took a shock lead in the 23rd only for PSG goalkeeper Kevin Trapp to brilliantly push Diego Costa's header onto the crossbar following left back Abdul Baba Rahman's drifting cross.

PSG attacked next, but Ibrahimovic—having done well to peel off his marker—delivered a poor downward header that startled Courtois only because it was so weak.

Di Maria wasted another opportunity, but the breakthrough came after Lucas was fouled by Mikel some 25 meters out, and Ibrahimovic's powerful free-kick clipped Mikel's leg and wrong-footed Courtois.

Ibrahimovic's intense joy at scoring was understandable, too, given that he was harshly sent off during the first half in the second leg last season.

But PSG's defense, so rarely tested in the French league, paid the price for poor marking when Costa rose brilliantly above Ibrahimovic to flick on a corner, the ball fell to Mikel and he blasted past Trapp.

Genesis Cup to hold youth league

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Daniel's Andrew Palino barrels through the defense of Caleb's Willy Sacdalan during their title game in the Genesis Cup last year at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The 5th Genesis Cup Christian Churches Inter-Color Basketball League will feature a youth division when it opens shop next month at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

League organizer Pastor Noel Puno said there are 53 players in the 13 to 18 age group who have registered for the annual caging and they will be divided into four or five teams, depending on the final number of entries. Puno added the youth teams will carry the names of Ezra, Nehemiah, Johan, Joel, and Obadiah.

As for the adult division, 89 players have signed up and Puno said they are looking to have the same number of squads (8) as last year. Team names are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, and defending champion Caleb.

Caleb dethroned Daniel in last year's finals after pulling off a 91-88 come-from-behind win.

Meanwhile, league officials and coordinators of each participating squads will have a meeting on Feb. 22 to decide the final details of the opening day and other important matters. ***(RBM)***

SIDE OUT

From Page 28

Charnessa Lizama and Toni Yamada duplicated Side Out's feat in the women's division.

Yamazama fell to Canpal's Linda Anastacio and Nicole LeBlanc in the winner's bracket semis, 18-21, but still managed to earn a slot to the finals after knocking out Sabrina The Teen's Sabrina Pangelinan and Adele Hudkins in the loser's bracket semis, 21-14.

In their second faceoff with Anastacio and LeBlanc, Yamada and Lizama posted a 21-14 win in Game 1 to keep their title hopes alive before sealing the championship with a 15-9 victory in Game 2.

Six other teams joined Yamazama, Canpal, and Sabrina The Teen in the women's division contest with Brass, Shake & Bake, White Asian, Chammoles, Faithfully, and Haolepinos completing the field.

Before losing twice to Yamazama, Canpal was unbeaten in two games in the elimination, registering its pair of victories against Chammoles, 21-12, and Sabrina, 22-20, while the eventual champion also went 2-0 in the winner's bracket, topping Brass, 21-12, and Shake & Bake, 21-15.

In the loser's bracket, Sabrina nailed two wins to remain in contention, as it prevailed over White Asian, 21-13, and Shake & Bake, 21-14. Shake & Bake earlier beat Faithfully, 23-21, while White Asian outclassed Haolepinos, 21-16. Other results in the loser's bracket had Haolepinos and Faithfully winning over Brass, 21-8., and Chammoles, 21-18, respectively.

SAIPAN

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among the starters for the Saipan All-Stars, teaming up with CNMI coach Kiyoshi Sekiguchi, assistant coach Jersh Angeles, Gil Chong Koo, Jacky Lee, Peter Loken, Panapa Peteru, Dan Westphal, and goalie Clayton Izuka. Christopher Aninzo was the goalkeeper for the winning team in the second half, while Yong Ju Lee, Jun Sik Kim, Dino Chun, Cosmos Kim, Arkie Reusora, and Bada Lee were also on the roster.

The loss against Saipan All-Stars was Japan Soccer College's second yesterday, as the latter also fell to fellow Japanese team Chuo University Country in the morning match.

Chuo drew back-to-back goals from Hiroki Ando in the second half and got one more from Kazuhiro Kawakame to gain cushion at halftime, 3-1. Ando's brace came in the 18th and 22nd minute, while Kawakame lit up the board in the 25th.

Sugawara nailed the lone goal for Japan Soccer College in the first half (38th minute) and his team failed to pull off a come-from-behind win after making only one goal in the second game, courtesy off Kentero Tauchiya's shot in the 74th minute.

Meanwhile, Chuo will play its second game on Saipan today when it challenges the CNMI Men's National Team's training pool at 4:30pm also at the Oleai pitch. The Blue Ayuyus will enter the game sporting a 0-2 record in the friendly matches this month. The Commonwealth bets bowed to Aries FC, 1-2, last Feb. 6 and then absorbed a 0-1 defeat at the hands of Japan Soccer College last Tuesday.

SHIRLEY'S

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the first half to force the deadlock, while Gillian Villagomez added one more goal in the second.

In the other girls U15 match played at the San Antonio pitch, Kanoa romped past Paire FC, 12-0.

Kanoa recorded one goal after another for the lopsided win against the hapless Paire that played without its key player Guinevere Borja, who was nursing an injury.

Toremy Diaz and Paulyn Grace Joyce did most of the damage for Kanoa, as they tallied four goals each. Kiara Maganti, Princess Alcantara, Britany Wally, and Ericka Santiago added one goal apiece for Kanoa.

Meanwhile, Tan Holdings won via default against Matansa in the third girls U15 match scheduled last Saturday at the San Antonio pitch.

Over at the Oleai Sports Complex, MP United and Matansa downed their respective foes in the boys U17 division.

Matansa played in the opener and defeated Paire, 4-1.

Jun Sik Kim canned two goals for Matansa, while Joshua De Leon and Chad Shankweiler chipped in one each. Lukesh Lama nailed the lone goal for Paire. Kim fired up Matansa's offense with his goal in the 12th minute, while De Leon made it to the board too in the first half with his shot one minute before the opening frame ended. Kim also scored Matansa's first goal in the second half before Shankweiler closed out for the winning squad. Lama got his goal in the 40th minute.

In the second game, MP United shut down Tan Holdings, 3-0.

Keeanu Diaz, Sun Joon Tenorio, and Bada Lee joined forced in lifting MP United to the easy win. Diaz gave MP United its first goal in the opening frame, while Tenorio and Lee found their target in the final half.

2016 White Coconut Tennis Classic

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Martin Jambor reaches in for a return, while Conatsu Kaga stays at the baseline during their mixed-up doubles title match against Peter Loken and Eugene Park in the 2016 White Coconut Tennis Classic last Monday at the Pacific Islands Club courts.

Allan Lee serves during his and Jeff Race's quarterfinal game against Peter Loken and Eugene Park.

Peter Loken returns to Jeff Race.

Moris Villanueva makes a backhand return.

Ryan Cho makes a return, while teammate Daniel Kang looks on.

Ericka Tuttle, left, and Carol Lee exchange high-fives after scoring a point against Moris Villanueva and Asia Raulerson.

Asia Raulerson hits a forehand.

Allan Lee and Peter Loken shake hands after their mixed-up doubles match, while their teammates Jeff Race, left, and Eugene Park look on.

Conatsu Kaga serves, while teammate Martin Jambor gets ready near the net.

Pistons acquire Harris from Magic for Jennings, Ilyasova

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Genesis Cup to hold youth league

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Saipan All-Stars edge Japanese foes

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Saipan All-Stars and Japan Soccer College players ward off each other as they chase the ball during the second half of their friendly game yesterday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Saipan All-Stars nipped Japan Soccer College, 2-1, during their friendly game yesterday at the Oleai Sports Complex Field.

Sean Perez and Martin Jambor knocked in one goal apiece for the island's selection, while Yoshinori Sugawara scored the lone goal for the visiting team from Niigita.

Perez won the scramble for possession inside the penalty area and kicked the ball in at the eighth minute to put the Saipan All-Stars on the board. The group went on to preserve the slim advantage at the break, as they foiled Japan Soccer College's every attempt to equalize.

At the resumption of the match, Saipan All-Stars continued to be aggressive on offense and was rewarded with their persistence, thanks to Jambor's conversion in the 55th minute. Jambor's goal served as the insurance for Saipan All-Stars as 10 minutes later, Japan Soccer College scored off Sugawara shot.

Jambor and Perez were

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Shirley's FC opens title defense bid with win

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Shirley's Football Club started its title defense bid in the girls U15 division of the 2016 NMIFA Youth Spring League on a positive note after slipping past MP United FC, 3-2, last Saturday at the San Antonio Middle School Field.

Shirley's, which ruled the 2015 spring season after earning an 8-2-0 win-draw-loss record against Matansa's 7-3-0, got goals from three different players to edge MP United. New recruit Ester Jones drew first blood for the defending champion, as she found the back of the net in the first half, while holdovers Diana Maniacop and Katrina Costales scored in the second half.

As for MP United's side, Grace Choi hit the board in

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Shirley's FC's Katrina Costales, left, and MP United's Gillian Villagomez run after the ball during the first half of their girls U15 game in the NMIFA spring league last Saturday at the San Antonio Middle School Field.

Side Out, Yamazama top 'For the Love'

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Side Out and Yamazawa negated their foes' twice-to-beat advantage to win in the For the Love of Volleyball Tournament held last Saturday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan sandcourt.

Side Out, which had Chris Nelson and Tyler Willsey as players, ruled the men's division after recording back-to-back victories against Old Farts' Tyce Mister and Russ Quinn. The Nelson-Willsey duo prevailed in Game 1 of the finals, 21-15, and then registered a 15-7 victory in the deciding Game 2.

Willsey and Nelson had to down Quinn and Mister twice, as the Old Farts came into the finals undefeated. Old Farts won its first game against Route 66, 21-9, and made it two in a row with a 21-13 triumph over Loaded Blanks.

With its first two sets, Old Farts set up a semis showdown against Side Out in the winners' bracket. Side Out also prevailed in its first two games, winning over the Titans, 21-13, and Arhopw, 21-14. Old Farts went on to end Side Out's run with a 21-19 victory and the former also took the first finals seat.

Side Out, on the other hand, dropped to the loser's bracket and had to eliminate Loaded Blanks, 22-20, to get a second crack at Old Farts. Nick Gross and Steven Beyer of Loaded Blanks forced a rubber against Side Out for the last finals ticket after ousting Air Mike, 21-18.

Meanwhile, Yamazama, which was composed of

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NMIVA PHOTO
Participants and organizers of the For the Love of Volleyball Tournament pose for a photo after the competition at the Hyatt Regency Saipan sandcourt last Saturday.